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The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Liston Pope:

OUR STAGNATED PREACHER TRAINING

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By Liston Pope

OUR STAGNATED

EVEN a brief experience as dean of a seminary renders one much less certain that he knows what good teaching is or what a good curriculum is. Certainly one of the characteristics of a good teacher is a burning conviction that his own subject is the most important one in the curriculum, but a dean who displays any such partisan zeal is likely to infuriate his colleagues and to distort the curriculum. Perhaps an old aphorism should be changed to read: "Those who can, teach; those who can't, become deans or presidents and make speeches about education."

Contrary to the usual jibe about teachers who become administrative officers and never read a book thereafter, I have found it necessary to read a great deal during the past year, mostly in the catalogues and bulletins of other theological schools in this country and overseas. This kind of reading is not exactly inspirational. The material contained therein could not be classified as great literature, though much of it is fiction. Most seminary catalogues remind one of a comment on Webster's dictionary, to the effect that Webster was doubtless a great writer but had very little sense of plot.

Tentative Judgments

It is perfectly clear that no catalogue can be an adequate index to the full-orbed life of a theological institution. No description of a course can quite capture the flavor or merit of the teaching. But pending a new survey of theological education, a careful study of catalogues, supplemented by a certain amount of visiting among the seminaries, provides the best basis available for knowledge of what is going on in theological education, at home and abroad. On the basis of my own limited experience, certain tentative judgments about the current state of theological education appear to be defensible.

In the first place, very few creative ideas have appeared in theological education in the United States in the last thirty years, and in theological education in Europe for an even longer time. To confine ourselves to the American scene, the introduction of biblical criticism about seventy-five years ago provided new horizons in theological education, giving to the Bible a new freshness and meaning after the long night of literalism. A quarter of a century later, the social gospel movement profoundly affected a great many seminaries, opening new vistas in their curriculums and giving to all their work a new relevance and a new hope. Decades later an American theologian looked back on his seminary days and observed:

"It seemed to many of us who were studying theology and beginning our ministry in the eighties and nineties as if humanity were on the eve of the golden age. . . . The Kingdom of God appeared to be at hand. . . . As the dawn of the twentieth century approached we felt sure that it meant the ushering in of the reign of universal brotherhood. . . . It has been a harsh awakening."

Doubtless the optimism of those decades was shallow; the point is that theological education had verve and excitement about it. These same qualities reappeared when the religious education movement swept the seminaries just after the First World War; again faculty and students saw visions and dreamed dreams.

Comparable Movements

The only comparable movements in the last two decades have been the rise of the ecumenical spirit and the renewed emphasis on theology (and especially the associated tendencies called "neo-orthodoxy"). These recent developments are extremely important and are not to be discounted. They have not drastically affected the curriculums of our institutions, however; they have simply placed a renewed emphasis on certain well established fields of study.

It may be that theological education has reached maturity and has stopped chasing mirages or fads. But another way of putting it would be to say that, of all major types of education at this moment, theological education is probably the most con-

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Yale's Dean discusses the current state of theological education in American seminaries

PREACHER-TRAINING

servative and inflexible. Despite the tampering that has occurred around the edges, the theological curriculum is still largely medieval in structure and purpose.

A skeptical observer might well inquire whether our various fields of study have any distinctive relevance to the perilous condition or extraordinary possibilities of man at the middle of the twentieth century. In biblical studies, critical and historical analysis still holds the center of the stage, though one wonders why it is necessary to disabuse a pagan generation, including theological students, of a fundamentalism they never had. Even our theological students need, by and large, to be introduced to the Bible, not put in a sparring ring with it. In theology, there is a frank return to the past—a procedure indispensable for perspective but inadequate for a theology that lives and marches. The point has now been re-established—and none too soon—that man is a sinner, and it is time to go on from there. God did not allow even Adam to bask in the shade of his ill-starred tree indefinitely. In ethics, it is still widely assumed (according to the catalogues) that biblical commentaries are adequate social commentaries. In practical theology, the emphasis is still on the sermon and the parish call, though both tend increasingly to become less effective methods of reaching people.

Mood Emphasizes Conservatism

In short, theological education appears to be stabilized or stagnated, as you prefer. There are some exciting experiments, such as marginal courses in methods of mass communication and an occasional program of specialized training for a special type of ministry. But by and large the general mood in the seminaries appears to emphasize conservation and to discourage imaginative ventures.

Life-giving ideas appear to be at a premium in the contemporary world. But none of us will find them unless we are stirred by a profound discontent with our schools as they are, and thereby made perhaps the more receptive to their coming.

Second, the theological curriculum ought to be more rigorous than it generally appears to be at present. It is widely assumed, and often conceded, that any student can get a theological degree without great mental exertion, and that his status in school is easily jeopardized by moral delinquency but not by intellectual default. Teachers and students in other professional schools sometimes look on divinity schools with a mixture of pity and academic scorn. Often their attitude is based simply on prejudice or ignorance, but it is all too often justified.

Improving the Product

We tend to coddle our seminary students in minor and major respects, doing everything possible to shield them from financial or academic strain. Can one blame the students for assuming that they can ride through the seminary on a clergy fare? We charge them virtually no tuition; we get them jobs to pay their expenses and those of their wives and children; we almost never bounce one out of our community for intellectual or spiritual mediocrity. We have been a haven for the marginal men. A college president protested recently when I told him that our school had just dropped several men for low, though passing, academic standing. "But the seminaries have always been the last refuge of the lame ducks," he said. "When you throw them out, they have no place else to go."

No thoughtful and kind teacher likes to be tough or hard-boiled in his relations with his students, and the adoption of any such pose is always a bit adolescent. But the best men who are knocking at our seminary doors—and an unprecedented number of first-rate students are knocking now—will be repelled by intellectual flabbiness and academic laxness, and the ministry will be poorly served. Ministerial students are preparing for one of the most exacting and difficult professions on earth. The seminaries owe it to the ministry to be screening stations as well as training institutions. If possible, we should eliminate the weak brothers by refusing to admit them; but if some of low ability do slip through, we should encourage them none too gently to go into lay forms of Christian service.

Practically, this means among other things that seminary presidents and deans may need to increase the amount of iron in their administrative diet, and (it goes without saying) to place the welfare of the church above the effort to break records in the number of admissions or in the size of en-

rollment. Sterner policies may not add to our popularity, but they will improve our product.

Third, if the seminary curriculum ought to be more rigorous, it ought by the same token to be less rigid. At first glance, this conclusion appears to be a non sequitur. But the connecting link in the syllogism is found in the quality of the student. Inferior students have to be fed with a spoon; superior students can grow most effectively if they are encouraged to work out their own theological education with fear and trembling and with careful and prolonged counseling by faculty members.

There is a strong trend toward a core curriculum, or "general education," in the undergraduate colleges at the moment, and many seminaries are following suit with a heavily prescribed curriculum of required courses. Many seminaries have not needed to follow suit, as they had never succumbed to the system of electives in the first place.

Faculty Assumptions

There are good grounds for believing that a uniformly prescribed course of theological education is, in most instances, a mistake. For one thing, there is a vast difference between a seminary student and a college freshman or sophomore—or, at least, there ought to be—and it is unfortunate to treat seminary students as if they were freshmen. The seminary student is older; he is in school for a more definite purpose; he must learn while still in seminary to be self-directing and self-disciplined, or he is not likely to learn at all.

To be sure, every faculty assumes that it knows more about training for the ministry than any student could know—even though a large percentage of our theological professors have themselves had very little experience in the parish ministry. Each faculty member who is worth his salt tends to feel that his particular field is indispensable to an adequate program of training. And it is perfectly true that some students would turn liberty into license, and take most of their work under their favorite teacher if allowed to do so. A cynic might surmise that the system of required courses is a device by which a faculty protects itself and its students against its best teachers.

So it is that the theological student is required to take Old Testament, New Testament, church history and pastoral theology in his first year, plus possibly an elective as between Greek and Hebrew; in the second year, systematic theology, religious education, Christian ethics and homiletics. In the third year, if he has run the course with diligence, he may actually sneak in that odd little seminar which Professor Blank is trying just for fun and because he himself knows little about its subject. Seminary education is largely table d'hôte, though the diner may decide whether he wants his pie á la mode.

Clearly there are certain rudiments of a theological education which every student should get. But it is better for the student to see why he should get them and how they fit into his total program of training, and thus be led to choose them for himself, than to have them arbitrarily crammed down his throat by the faculty. Further, the ministry is an art, not a trade or a science, and artists must be trained one by one; they cannot be produced on an assembly line. Perhaps we need more individual counseling in our seminaries, and fewer inflexible requirements.

Curriculum Extremes

There are two extremes with regard to a curriculum: the laissez faire extreme, at which everybody teaches and takes what he pleases, and the extreme of regimentation, at which everything is nicely and firmly laid out, including at last the students. Most seminaries appear to err toward the latter, just as state universities and progressive educators have erred toward the former.

The most important thing is that the curriculum should find integration within the student himself. There is much discussion of integration in theological education, and it is clear that our different disciplines do need to be related more closely to each other. But the student, not the faculty or the catalogue, is the primary nexus. Except as we send out mature, responsible graduates, capable of integrating the fragments of their seminary training because they have been taught how to do that in the seminary itself, our beautiful curriculums are meaningless sheets of paper, and our teaching is a form of exhibitionism.

Seminaries Face Challenge

Fourth, American theological education doubtless faces now the greatest challenge in its history. Its opportunities for service to the churches of America are very great; a chronic shortage of trained ministers is virtually matched by an unprecedented number of applicants for admission to the seminaries.

The opportunities for service to world-wide Christendom are equally great. Due to tragic events of the last decade, centers of theological education in other countries have been seriously crippled, and Christendom looks increasingly to America for the training of religious leadership. We are expected not only to prepare Americans for posts in other countries; increasingly our schools are likely to have cosmopolitan student bodies and faculties drawn from many lands.

Universal perspectives must dominate our theological education; the days of narrow denominationalism and provincial viewpoints in our seminaries are numbered. It is to be hoped that new occasions will inspire our seminaries to assume new duties, less for their own glory than for the kingdom, the power, and the glory of Jesus Christ throughout the earth.

This summary of a sermon recently delivered by Pulpit's Editorial Associate ROBERT J. McCRACKEN before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club inaugurates a new Pulpit feature. Other sermon condensations will be found on page 19. Dr. McCracken is the pastor of world-famous Riverside Church, New York.

Is This a Christian Country?

— A Sermon Summary —

By Robert J. McCracken

THE current of life in America today is flowing against organized Christianity. The forces which go to the making of the contemporary mind are in instance after instance godless. People are being dechristianized by all sorts of secularist pressures. Christian principles in regard to sex and marriage, war and peace, work and wealth are losing their hold and are fading from the consciousness of large sections of the population.

Americans often speak of Russia as atheistic. It is openly and frankly atheistic. Ought we not to ask, however, in what significant or realistic sense we can apply the name "Christian" to ourselves or to our national life? It is true that we have not deliberately or wholly abandoned the Christian element in our tradition; but does that element count with us as it once did? Is the moral tone of the nation—its politics, its business life, its literature, its theater, its movies, its radio networks—Christian?

God Has No Favorites

Take our social standards—the cruel discrimination based on racial prejudice that runs right through American life and is flatly at variance with the basic Christian principle that God has no favorites but seeks the highest good for all his creatures. Take our economic standards—the gross inequalities of living conditions in this country, the shocking contrasts in income reported by the National Resources Commission. Take our sexual standards—premarital relationships more the rule than the exception, extramarital relationships with many a commonplace, a fall from virtue reckoned as having no more significance than a stumble at the curbstone, the erratic school of fiction with writers like Erskine Caldwell and John O'Hara sure of a place among the best sellers.

And what of our master motives? Are they Christian? If we are frank with ourselves we are not obliged to own that the values by which we live are as materialistic as, say, Russia's? We make the mistake of equating civilization with comfort. Our standards are mostly quantitative—bigger and better conveniences for everybody. It is not for nothing that the saying is current that the American worships "the almighty dollar" and "the goddess of getting-on."

Or take the youth of this country. They are educated in spiritually neutral schools and launched into what is increasingly a secularist society. Most of them are ignorant of Christian teaching, strangers to Christian worship, indifferent to Christian moral standards, their attitude being not that religion is to be opposed but that it is an option, a hobby which one may or may not be keen about just as others are, or are not, keen about golf or music or bridge. A generation is growing up in this country with no personal religion. The colleges and universities are full of them. "Happy, healthy, lovable pagans," is how one chaplain describes them, and then he goes on to raise the question whether there has ever been a period when the continuity of the Christian tradition as a cultural fact was worn as thin as is the case today.

Christianity Still a Force

Christianity is far from being a spent force in America. There is a residual and still operative Christianity among us which is by no means exhausted. It is too deeply embedded in our national life to be wiped out. It has been taught and practiced here over a long term of years. The Bible has been circulated and read by successive generations of devout men and women. As a result the Christian spirit has permeated this country to a remarkable degree. There is no ground for supposing that Christianity is played out. "The faith is an anvil which has worn out many hammers."

But the situation is critical. Never in the history of the United States has a spiritual renewal been more needed. No one who is genuinely Christian can be complacent about the way in which the current of life is flowing in this country today. No one can think any longer of his religion as his own private affair. A man's religion today is taking sides in the crucial conflict of our generation. The choice before us is between the formation of a new Christian society and the acceptance of a pagan one. There must either be a return to Christianity or a still further dechristianization of thought and conduct. A true religion or a false one: that is the real choice before us.

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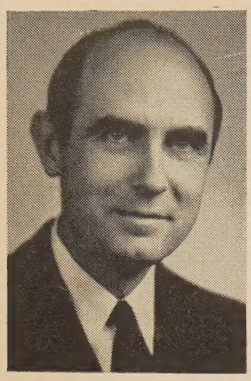


By Orlo Choguill

The Spirit of Faith

. . . having the same spirit of faith . . . we also believe and therefore speak. II Corinthians 4:13.

OUR day is not one of triumphant faith. If faith is "that which affirms the worth of an end or an object," as the great jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes defined it, or is "that which makes us hopeful and sure, and makes the things we hope for seem real, and the things we love to think about seem true," as Dwight Bradley once declared, then our generation cannot be described as breathing a spirit of faith.

Newspaper headlines, the excited accent of radio news analysts, our private conversations over the coffee cups, even our prayers, if we could hear them played back to us, are not voiced in the language of hope and certainty. On the contrary, they utter notes of anxiety, uncertainty, insecurity, frustration, fear and even despair. A recent issue of the *Reader's Digest* carried an article by Fulton Oursler under the title "The Twilight of Honor." These sentences were in it:

> Our greatest danger is not from Russia but from ourselves, from our growing disregard of principles and our reliance on expediency. Along this immoral road we have already gone far, feeling meanwhile more discontent than ever before. In bookshops and drugstores, in correspondence courses and lectures, we seek peace of mind, peace of soul. Our private lives reflect the public evidences of decay and we are not happy about it. The renewal of conscience in modern society is its only hope.

Now That Tomorrow Is Here

During the war years we bolstered our courage by the conviction that when peace came again we would have all the things we had been denied by the demands of war. We fastened the desires of our hearts to that conviction. We talked and dreamed of a better tomorrow. Now that tomorrow is here and it isn't what we thought it would be. Perhaps we made the error William James described long ago in *The Moral Equivalent of War,* where he stated that one reason it is so hard for people to live together in peacetime is that they assume that a peace economy is a pleasure economy.

ORLO CHOGUILL is the pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kan. His church was chosen as one of the "Great Churches of America" in the Christian Century's *poll of 100,000 Protestant ministers. A definitive description of the work of the church appeared in the Nov. 8 issue of that magazine.*

Whatever the cause, we are not living in a time of great faith. We do not trust other nations, we do not trust our political leadership, we suspect the motives of other people, we aren't sure even of ourselves.

The April 1948 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* carried a biographical story of Chick Young, the cartoonist who draws the comic strip "Dagwood and Blondie." The author described Mr. Young's abounding interest in his garden—his avocados, pecans, olives; but, he said, there was one tree more interesting to Mr. Young than all the rest—a hybrid, a cross of banana and pear. The striking thing about this tree was that its fruit was not edible until it fell off the tree, yet when it fell it was squashed beyond recovery and could not be eaten. The cartoonist called it his frustration tree.

I'm not convinced that such a horticultural specimen exists, but many of us do grow trees of this sort in our spiritual orchards. We spend our energy and our efforts producing a fruit that is inedible when it ripens. The peace we longed for isn't what we had hoped, with fear of Russia always darkening the horizon. The economic security we struggled and skimped for is threatened by the worm of inflation. The illusion we nursed that we were a little superior to other people because we happened to be born white and American, and therefore certain things ought not happen to us, is gone.

Bible Speaks to Every Age

In our perplexity and anxiety we turn here and there looking for security, both material and spiritual. We seek frantically for the "sure thing." Sometimes we call it peace of mind. We aren't particular how it is labeled or what ingredients are in it. We aren't much interested in theology. We want paregoric for our souls. No, ours is not a time of great faith; we have too little of the substance of things hoped for, we are not anchored solid to the evidence of things not seen.

One of the glories of Holy Scripture is that it speaks to every age, every generation, every condition of men. It conveys always and everywhere the word of God. One of God's greatest spokesmen was St. Paul. One of Paul's greatest messages to a troubled, confused and blundering people we

know as II Corinthians. And one of the most illuminating and penetrating parts of that epistle is in chapter 4, from verse 5 to the end.

The men and women of the church in Corinth were folks about like us. The moral and spiritual climate of Corinth in A.D. 56 was about the same as that of America in 1950. An authoritative commentary states that the situation in Corinth gave Paul reason for distinct anxiety. "The church was returning to a measure of pagan habits of living as shown by the party spirit, skeptical questioning to which they were giving themselves, a general attitude of independence in life and worship." After Paul's first letter the moral attitude seemed to improve, but not the distrust of group for group and party for party. The Corinthians, like us, did not breathe or live by a spirit of faith.

The verses I referred to (II Cor. 4:5-18) were written by a man who had come to know about all that earth offers of experience. He was no theorist. He knew life, for he had lived it. He knew God, for God had shined in his heart to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Life, for Paul, had been first-hand with its joys and sorrows, pleasures and pain, achievements and failures, laughter and tears. Faith for Paul was no second-hand thing. From the day on the road to Damascus to the day he wrote this letter, Christ had been a growing reality filling his soul. Paul's yearning for the people of Corinth was a mature passion. His words are sincere. They strike not one phony note. He bares his soul before his blundering friends that they may see in it a hope and faith born of God, and claim that hope and faith for their own. His letter is not so much argument as testimony. His words are spiritual biography. I have been perplexed, he writes, pressed on every side, straitened, pursued, smitten down, yet never unto despair nor forsaken nor destroyed.

We Live In God's World

Here we of 1950 interrupt this author of A.D. 56. Anyone who has a word like that today has an audience. That's what we want to hear. Any man with that kind of message is our man. What is his word? What is his secret? We too are perplexed, pressed on every side, straitened, pursued, smitten down, nigh unto despair. "Tell us, Paul!" we cry. "Forget the people of Corinth for a moment and tell us what you have that we do not. How did you get your spirit of faith?"

And Paul says to us as he said to the people of Corinth: Any poise, any confidence that I have stems first from an awareness of the exceeding greatness of the power of God!

We have lost a great deal of the pride we used to have in ourselves. The atom bomb sent us cowering to caves, in terror of our own creation. We uncorked a magic bottle and released evil genii that we can never recapture and put back. Our lack of faith is not born alone of indifference; Paul calls us back to the fundamental fact of life, back to sea level, from which we must run all our cultural and ethical elevations. God, he says, is not your size. Do not underestimate his resources, just because you know the barrenness of your own.

How we need to remember that we live in God's world! He made it; he can remake it. Our faith is like Elijah's. You remember that even after great success and glory Elijah's spirit quailed and, in trembling and defeat, he prayed that God would take his life. "I only am left," he lamented. He thought everything good had failed. He could see no happy outcome. He felt the end wasn't worth the effort. He quit. We feel that way so often. Disappointment, betrayal of trust, misunderstanding, the power of some old temptation lays us low in despair. However, Elijah wasn't the only decent man in the world, nor in Israel. There were 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah had forgotten that God was not such a one as himself.

We Preach Christ Jesus

There is no ground for a spirit of faith until we lay hold on the greatness of God. We are creatures; he is Creator. Faith in self does perish, faith in people may waver, but faith in the greatness of God will never fail us. God alone is able to make the deepest things we hope for and the dearest things we think about come true. One of the most radiant people I ever knew was a man afflicted with ailments of body and worries and troubles of mind beyond those most of us are called to bear. I asked him once how he did it. He handed me this bit of verse:

> Here comes a man who lost his leg,
> He needs compassion much.
> But that man lost his faith in God;
> For him there is no crutch.

God was his sole support and God was more than enough.

But, said Paul to the Corinthians, it is not just a recognition of the greatness of God that sustains me. The power that comes from God to hold me, comes from Jesus. We preach Christ Jesus. God has shined in his face. The love of Christ constraineth us. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. And I know that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also.

For Paul, life's consuming reality was Jesus Christ. He never saw Jesus in the flesh, but that was never a barrier to the Savior's reality. Christ for Paul was not only a companion; he was an indwelling power. Through Christ, Paul had become a new man and he believed that that experience was possible for every other person. It was Christ who not only gave life its fullness but assured Paul of a reconciliation with God that all the good deeds of a lifetime could not buy.

Most of us believe in Jesus. We have professed it finds its roots as well as its fruits in fear.

our faith in him before men, but we do not let him invade our lives so completely that his likeness may be seen in us. Paul gave everything to him. Belief for Paul meant commitment; he had to witness to his belief and to live it.

Until we believe with enough devotion to want to tell others of our faith, until we believe with enough surrender to want to live in our daily relationships as Christ's men and women, we will exhale no spirit of faith. But everyone who does live daily in comradeship with Jesus knows a strength in his soul that sustains him in peril, toil and pain. Christ's is a love that, once we accept it, constraineth us and will not let us go.

The world's sickness at bottom is a spiritual sickness. The cure is not ours to supply, for the power to heal is not in us. Paul knew that it was in God, through Jesus Christ. Paul believed that he who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead can raise us up also. He knew it, believed it and spoke it.

Three years ago three women came from the Orient to go about through the Presbyterian Church to tell us what Christ had done for them and their people. One was from China, one from the Philippines and one from Japan. Mrs. Uemura was the first Japanese woman permitted to leave Japan after the war. Dr. Llano came from the Philippines. These two came to America separately and met for the first time at breakfast one morning. When Dr. Llano saw Mrs. Uemura, visions of her own country, hospital, home and family, all devastated by the Japanese, came before her and she couldn't say a word. "I couldn't speak to my enemy," she afterward related. The second morning there was a knock at her door. Outside stood Mrs. Uemura. With bowed head she said: "Can you forgive me for what my people did to you and your people? Will you go to breakfast with me?" Then Dr. Llano said, they both dropped to their knees and prayed a while, and then they cried—and then they washed their faces and went to breakfast. The love of Christ conquered their bitterness and made them new people.

It will always be so when we give ourselves to him. God's power did not stop with St. Paul. It is for each one of us if we will.

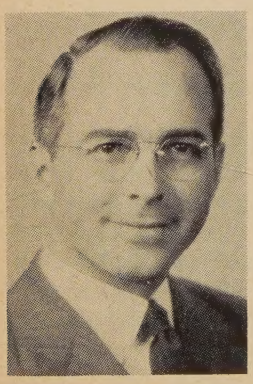
A Square Look at Life

1-28-51

By John W. McKelvey

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you . . . Matt. 5:21-22.

YOU CAN easily see that this text suggests precisely why Jesus has become the focal and transition point in all history. He had the undimmed vision to see truths about life which somehow were never quite apparent to other men before his time, and with forthright daring he expounded these insights so vividly that men were catapulted out of the abysmal impotence of ancient paganism into the glorious presence of a redeeming and almighty God. Life ever afterward was different when men looked at it in the light of Christ's work and life. This is, to put it simply, why we date time as we do, B.C. and A.D., before Christ and after Christ.



Unfortunately, men have not persistently and consistently profited by the insights of Jesus. This failure explains the confusion and disorder in our contemporary thinking and doing. That we may not grope blindly for the light I purpose in humility and simplicity to dust off some of the creative ideas underlying Christ's gospel and thereby get a square look at life.

I

First of all, let me help you to see what Jesus saw about life in relation to oneself. "You have heard that it was said by them of old time" that man was an individual, that he was free to do as he pleased, that he stood alone against the elements and his enemies, and that if he survived the ensuing melee it was because he had enough gumption to look out for Number One. But, dominant as this view was, Jesus looked at life and saw at once that it was both superficial and inadequate. "I say unto you," he declared with unruffled confidence, "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

The best way to see what Jesus saw is to see how this idea works out. Let me illustrate his concept of life by telling the story of Professor Krauss, learned and humanitarian bacteriologist at Heidelberg before the last war. Christine, one

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JOHN W. McKELVEY'S preparation for the ministry was thorough. After graduating from Dickinson College and Drew Seminary, he spent one year each at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and at Bonn University, Germany. Now pastor of the Methodist Church in Lansdowne, Pa., he takes an active part in the missionary activities of his denomination.

of his students, is relating in Sidney Howard's play "The Silver Cord" her deep admiration for this man, whose eager and selfless devotion to the quest for the secrets of disease caused the students to call him, fondly, "the demon of the Neckar."

On a snowy winter afternoon Christine and a fellow student stopped work in the laboratory and started home. Intrigued by the zestful cries of children coming and going on their sleds, the two students found a boy with a large sled and rented it, with the boy, and coasted into the shadows of evening. The lights came out along the Neckar and the snow turned all the colors snow can turn, and still they coasted.

"Presently," Chris says in the play, "we had an accident. A bob turned over in front of us with an old man on it. We couldn't stop and so we just hit the bob and the old man. . . . We picked ourselves up . . . and went to see if we'd hurt the old fellow and God save us, it was Krauss himself! . . . I don't mind telling you, our hearts sank . . . but Krauss didn't mind. . . . 'My age hasn't improved my skill,' he said, smiling. . . .

"I could have kissed him," Chris goes on, "but I wasn't quite sure how he'd have taken that, so, instead, I asked him to join us. He was delighted. We kept it up for another hour, we two students and the great god Krauss. . . . He couldn't have been a day under seventy. Three months later, he died of an inoperable internal tumor. In his notes, they found an observation he had written on his condition that very day we coasted. Think of a man who could write observations on his approaching death, and then go off to coast afterwards! It's what life can be and should be. It's the difference between life and self."

The secret rediscovered by Christine is basic to the fruitful, joy-filled life.

II

A second insight which Jesus uncovered for men to see had to do with life in relation to society. "You have heard that it was said by them of old time" that life consists in the abundance of things which a man possesses, and in the struggle for survival the rule is every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. But in the very teeth of such a ruthless creed Jesus calmly declared: I say unto you that the meek shall inherit the earth; and he that is greatest among you shall be your servant; and inasmuch as you do it not unto the least of these my brethren, you do it not unto blessing and peace either for them or for yourself.

This profound concept of life in relationship to society has well-nigh become threadbare in these hectic times. Life has been hard and unrelenting and great numbers of people have borne the brunt of life's load so long that they have become sick of the burden, the so-called "white man's burden," or utterly indifferent to it. Life has lost its romance on this level. There is little incentive to do any more than exist, come what may. Perhaps the greatest need for all such people is a lively sense of humor—certainly nothing approximating a lecture.

Many people try desperately to dissociate themselves from the world in which they live, disclaiming any and all responsibility for the total mess, erroneously supposing that if they make this disclaimer they are thereby excused. With tragic blindness they fail to see that they belong to society whether or not they think that society belongs to them, and that great eventualities hinge upon their attitude toward humanity. I am afraid this recreant desire on the part of large numbers of people is being felt today in almost all fields. It is certainly manifest in the field of religion, where approximately 47 per cent of the population declines to accept any specific share in the leavening process of truth and righteousness within the body politic. It is all too evident in the realm of economics, where increasing numbers in business and industry are less concerned with what they can add to the total good and more concerned with what they can get in the form of better hours and wages or higher profits. And—to mention one more area—it is woefully present in the domain of democracy.

True democracy, in the words of Lincoln, is government *of* the people, *by* the people and *for* the people. If this is so—and who wants to deny it?—then I have dreadful news. In a recent election in Philadelphia, out of 1,026,749 citizens registered to vote, 245,000 voted—less than 25 per cent of the electorate. So serious is this indifference to one's obligations on the level of government that a well known jurist was expressing it but mildly when he said, "Not to vote is a species of treason against the public good." To vote does not require that one make speeches or pay a fee, but merely that one go to a near-by place and pull a lever.

What is happening in these areas where life impinges on moral duty to humanity is dramatically set forth in the horrible catastrophe which recently befell the cruise ship Noronic at its Toronto pier. Survivors told graphic stories of how screaming, pushing men and women fought to get off the ship. One woman had reached a rope tossed over the rail, but as she stopped to put a hitch knot on it three men pushed in front of her, shoving some screaming women out of the way and went down the rope themselves. One survivor described the victims as a "mob of men and women surging back and forth on deck, men pushing women around, and many were knocked to the floor." It is not a pretty picture. We can scarcely discount the things men do in panic, knowing as we do that at such times men are motivated from within according to their secret desires. Somehow life has become divorced from the ennobling concepts which Jesus brought to the relationships of man with man in pursuit of the common weal, and somehow we who claim intimate fellowship with our Lord must rediscover for our time the inescapable meaning of the Second Command-

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ment: Thou shalt love thy neighbor—even thine enemies also—as thyself, and shalt allow thy righteousness to exceed the righteousness of selfish interest and special privilege.

III

When it comes to the third invigorating concept which Jesus imparted to mankind—his insight with regard to life in relationship to God—I am inclined to think that many people behave much as Ulysses S. Grant did when he was a small boy of eight years. He was very anxious to own a colt belonging to a neighbor and begged his father to be allowed to buy the colt at the price demanded, namely, $25. "My father yielded," Grant said in his autobiography, "but said $20 was all the horse was worth, and told me to offer that price; if it was not accepted I was to offer $22.50, and if that would not get him, to give the $25 which the owner was asking. I at once mounted a horse and went for the colt. When I got to the neighbor's house I said to him: 'Papa says I may offer you $20 for the colt, but if you won't take that, I am to offer $22.50, and if you won't take that, to give you $25!" Grant summed up the incident by saying that it wouldn't take a Connecticut man to guess the price finally agreed upon.

In like manner multitudes in our generation are so bent on having their own way, on gaining the whole world, as it were, that they are ready and willing to bargain away all moral disciplines and divine dictates if haply they can achieve some vain shadow of pomp or circumstance which in the end is useless and without value.

It is, of course, an old story. "You have heard that it was said by them of old time" there is no God, and if there is, that God is capricious and unpredictable, and the verdict on human striving is nothing but futility and emptiness. But, affirms the Lord of history, I say unto you that you shall so live that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

I make no pretentions at being a seer, but I venture to say that there isn't one of us who has not said at some time or other, "What's the use? I don't count. The score's against me." The truth is, according to Jesus, that at no time is life more fraught with potential meaning than at times of futility and failure, and we ought not throw away the advantage of such moments in bitter disgust or puerile disparagement. C. H. Spurgeon once said: "Let it never be forgotten that when a man is down he has a grand opportunity for trusting God. . . . If our religion does not bear us up in time of trial, what is the use of it?" It is at such moments that we can say by faith: If I have not counted so far, if the breaks have been against me, from this moment onward, God helping me, I'll be a force to be reckoned with.

The majestic greatness of such a concept about life in relation to God is brought home in the inspired witness given about a decade ago by a young minister, then 38 years old, at work in the slums of London among the "down-and-outers" and the temporarily "hard-ups." Don Robbins died at 48, and his untimely passing greatly moved the people of London. The reason is not hard to discover. Some ten years before he had written:

> If life has been lived as though it were everything and the grave the end, then death must appear as the final tragedy. But if life has been lived in the reckless faith that God is love and that, beyond the grave, there lies eternity, then life can be hazarded cheerfully for God's purposes, while death will appear as the great dramatic moment when our faith flames into certainty. I do not pray to be spared death; I only pray that, when death comes, I may go out to meet it clear-eyed and eager, and that my death may fill up what has been lacking in my living. I only know that, whatever path my soul must tread, Christ will be there.

Self, society and God—life deals with all three, whether or no. We need nothing so much as to get a square look at life in its triangular relationship, the kind of look which Jesus enables us to get and which embodies hope and blessing and redemption.

A Pastoral Prayer

By William F. Hastings

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Santuce, Puerto Rico

ENLIGHTEN our minds, O God; warm our hearts with thy forgiving love, and dawn upon our souls with the glory and strength which though givest unto thy children.

Some of us come to thee with a sense of guilt and incompleteness. We have sinned against our own consciences and against thee. We have failed to follow the gleam of thy leading; we have passed by on the other side when our fellow man was in need of what thou wouldst give him through us. Forgive and save us through thy compassion.

Some of us come with decisions which must be made and problems which must be solved. We want to believe that thou hast a plan for our lives and a Christly pattern for all our future. Yet we have been slow to find that plan and seek that future. If this day we stand at a crossroads of life, grant us to look with honest eye upon our own capacities and upon all the failures which were ours when we failed to work with thee.

Some of us are praying this morning because we love someone very much, and because his body needs thy healing, or because his mind must be opened to thy light, or because his spirit must be made strong and sure by thy spirit. Make us to see also the others who are near us, and whom thou wouldst love and serve through us.

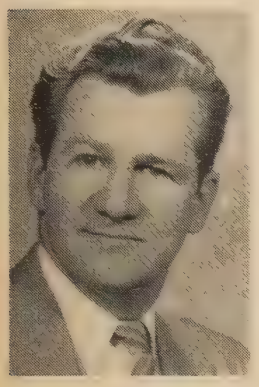
Baptize with thy Spirit those who lead in Christian work, here and in all the world. Lay thy hand upon our speaker this morning that he may truly speak for thee. Through Christ grant that we may become instruments of thy hand. Amen.

The Sovereignty of God

By William Jannsen

Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Exodus 20:2.

THERE is a story about two men who were caught in a strong wind at sea. The storm became severe and they were afraid for their safety. Neither knew how to pray. But the feeling of helplessness and need pressed in until one of them spontaneously said, "O Lord, I haven't bothered you for fifteen years. And I promise you now, if you get me out of this mess, I won't bother you for fifteen more." Allowing for much exaggeration, there is in that story a picture of a besetting sin of mankind, namely, that of regarding God as a convenient help-out but not in any real sense as the sovereign guide and ruler of our everyday lives.



Over against this stands one of the central doctrines of our faith, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. This doctrine is taught in the first commandment of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Jesus said that it was first in all the law and the prophets. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." Then adding the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," he said, "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets."

It would not be true to say that our generation has ceased to believe in God as the Supreme Being or has ceased to believe that Jesus was right in his teachings about God. There has been, rather, a renewed feeling after God and a return to him in observable ways. But to believe in God as the Supreme Being does not of itself mean that the believer accepts God as the sovereign of his life. Man is powerfully tempted to think and live as if he himself were sovereign and to want the Supreme Being to be a nonmoral bystander who does not inquire into our affairs or judge them but stands by to help us out in case of trouble. Man wants himself to be the god of his life and to have the God of the universe serve him!

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We may add at once that this is natural. It is so intensely natural that we need not be shocked or unduly mortified by it. But it is also so natural that we are certain to be deceived by it until the very truth and grace of God save us from the error. This is, clearly enough I am sure, the crux of the major crisis of our time. Man in his strange self-congratulation and self-satisfaction with his own ideas and gadgets assumes that he can and should occupy the sovereign's throne.

It is more than ordinarily significant that even Bertrand Russell, the skeptic and naturalist, accuses our age of "cosmic impiety," of a lack of respect for the universe and an unwillingness to listen to what it has to say to us. With reference to John Dewey's philosophy he makes the comment, "Man, formerly too humble, begins to think of himself as almost a God." Significant also, alongside these observations of Bertrand Russell, is a comment of Albert Schweitzer, recently in this country. Speaking in philosophic vein he said: "Our loss of real civilization is due to our lack of a theory of the universe. Only as we again succeed in attaining a strong and worthy theory of the universe . . . shall we again become capable of producing a new civilization." These are fateful words, spoken by great minds. But they are in effect the fateful words of the first commandment and of Jesus' summary of the law and the prophets.

Doctrine Holds Central Place

In thinking further of this doctrine of the sovereignty of God we find at least three reasons why it holds a central place in the Christian faith. The first is that it is realistic. It states the simple truth. The Bible suggests this continually in many ways. Psalm 8, which was included in our responsive reading of this morning, begins, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens." That is not poetic imagination; that is simple, overwhelming fact, if we believe in God at all. Our modern astronomers have helped to make this far more impressive to us than it could be to the psalm writer of 3,000 years ago. To him the earth was the center of a relatively tiny universe; to us the earth has virtually become a speck in a vast ocean of space.

The facts, in short, do not permit the thought that man is sovereign. William Beebe has told a story about Theodore Roosevelt and himself that illustrates the truth interestingly: "At Sagamore Hill, Theodore Roosevelt and I used to play a little game together. After an evening of talk, we would

go out on the lawn and search the skies until we found the faint spot of light-mist beyond the lower left-hand corner of the Great Square of Pegasus. Then one or the other would recite, 'That is the Spiral Galaxy, in Andromeda. It is as large as our Milky Way. It is one of a hundred million galaxies. It consists of a hundred billion suns, each larger than our sun.' Then Roosevelt would grin at me and say, 'Now I think we are small enough! Let's go to bed.' "

St. Paul stated the matter from another point of view. Said he on one occasion, chiding certain church people at Corinth because of their jealousy and strife over Paul and Apollos: "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." There is a beautiful statement of the same truth in still another field. Carved in the stone of the doorway of the French College of Physicians are these words: "I dressed his wounds; God healed him."

This is realism. It states the simple truth about God and man. It brings us at once to the correct point of view about life, to the true perspective. It makes impossible the conceit of the clever skeptic of whom someone said, "He thinks that because he is clever enough to write brilliant Latin verse, no God is clever enough to have made him." It brings the spirit of humility, of dependence. It brings reverence before God and the willingness to listen and to learn. Psalm 110 has condensed the truth into a proverb, and the book of Proverbs repeats it, "The fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

In the Realm of the Practical

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God holds a central place in the Christian faith for a second reason that follows from the first and takes us into the realm of practical living. Jesus expressed it in words that ring with emphasis: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." God has created all things, with their laws of being. These laws are inviolable, and if broken bring inevitable penalty. To believe this in a negative way can mean slavelike obedience and fear. To believe it in a positive way means that one knows where to look for the laws of wise and fruitful living.

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God thus becomes the native soil of the good life and the good society. It yields the fruit of goodness, character, lovingkindness, sound ethics and morality, and all that is summed up under the name of Christian virtue. There are those of course who do not believe this. This past week, for example, there appeared in a Chicago paper a rather lengthy letter written by the president of the United Secularists of America. Said this man among other things: "We believe in Man, the creator of all the gods of history, and in the limitless resources of the human mind when freed from the fetters of supernaturalism." But one wonders what would have become of the human race without its supernaturalists. How does anyone think that without Moses, the prophets, Socrates, Plato, Jesus Christ, the apostles, and many more of their kind, the world would have become a better world? I remember reading of Thomas Carlyle and how after 50 years of exhaustive study of history he said one day to the students of Edinburgh University: "I believe you will find in all histories that no nation that did not contemplate this wonderful universe with an awe-stricken and reverential belief that there was a great unknown, omnipotent, all-wise, and all-just Being superintending all men in it and all interests in it—no nation ever came to much, nor did any man either, who forgot that."

Fertile Soil of Social Problems

Forgetting the sovereign God and making man sovereign in his stead, is the fertile soil of our social problems today—and of our political problems as well. One day there is a story in the news of someone tipping a public official to get preferred treatment or a special favor outside of or contrary to the law. Another day one hears of outright favoritism by which one friend helps another, violating the public interest or right as if that were nothing. The philosophy that the individual is sovereign, that he must be served or pleased first, or that his group or party must be served, has so chipped away at the foundations of social integrity that the framework of society creaks ominously.

There is a greater long-range danger still, namely, that political pork, dishonor, bribery and corruption have come to be taken for granted in modern life. When we think of sickness as sickness we do not long neglect it but look for a remedy. When we begin to look upon the sickness as normal, the remedy is no longer sought. Something like this has happened to our age morally. We have become calloused, blasé. Or we are cynical. "What else do you expect?" or "What can you do?" people say. As a nation we have lost the gift of anger and righteous indignation, until unabashed self-seeking, irresponsibility, parasitism and demagoguery go virtually unopposed.

Happiness Through Surrender

How shall we make an end of this chipping away at the foundations of society? Can we recover simple honesty, honor, integrity and character in human affairs? The answer must be No as long as we cling to the treacherous illusion of the sovereignty of man. The answer will be Yes when once again the truth takes hold of us that God is sovereign and his will and laws are never broken. People and nations can only break themselves and tragically do. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

The warning is severe. The encouragement is equally great. God does not fail. He will provide the harvest in kind, whether good or evil, to our sowing.

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God holds a central place in the Christian faith for a third reason, suggested by Jesus in further well known words: "He that saveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake and the gospel's shall find it." Man is an allegiance-giving creature. He gives allegiance in some form to his lower self and Satan or to his higher self and God. But the great emancipating truth is this: Allegiance to God and his will brings the abundant life. Here is found the answer to that elusive search for happiness that so relentlessly drives masses of people to weariness and ennui. Happiness is not found by pursuing it. It is a by-product of something that on the surface looks like unhappiness, namely, giving up one's own immediate wishes and will to the higher will of God.

Clara Beranger, the author and teacher, writes about this strange, life-solving paradox in the book *Guideposts,* edited by Norman Vincent Peale. She writes of it with special reference to prayer and what she learned about prayer after finding herself in a difficult situation ten years ago. This briefly is her confession: "Ever since I can remember, I have believed in God, but my times of prayer were irregular, and my method was that of begging for something I particularly wanted."

"The first step in prayer is to let go of what we think or want and place ourselves and our affairs lovingly in the hands of the Father. We say, '*Thy* will be done,' but most of us think, '*my* will be done.' We offer a blueprint of what we want to God, instead of realizing that God sees not only what we want at the moment but the whole pattern of our life. He knows what is right for us, and his will for us is always good. If we believe that with all our mind and heart and mean it when we pray, 'Thy will be done,' we shall receive all we ask."

So it is in every area of life. When we yield to God and bow before him as the great sovereign, life begins to unfold. Our thinking begins from a new center and changes. Our desires are purged of smallness and self-centeredness to become large and loving. Happiness, no longer pursued by us, begins as it were to regard us as worthy hosts and makes its abode with us. "He that loseth his life for my sake and for the gospel's shall find it" remains a valid formula.

In Summary

We believe in the sovereignty of God and must believe because it is realistic. It states the simple truth about all the universe, including man—if we believe in God at all. We believe in the sovereignty of God and must believe because it is the native soil of Christian virtue, moral responsibility and the good society. We believe in the sovereignty of God and must believe because it holds the great secret of personal fulfillment and abundant living.

We need, in a sobered and wistful age, to rethink this doctrine and to profess it anew within the soul. We need to yield life with all its talents and energies more fully and gladly to God. Who of us in some way, or perhaps in many, does not need to do this—in terms of his thinking, or in terms of his time, or in terms of effort or money or possessions? And who of our friends or fellow men does not need to do this—to whom we may be able to bring the great blessing of this truth. Listen to a literally tremendous statement quoted in a book, *Invitation to Pilgrimage,* by John Baillie. It is from a biography of John Calvin—an overstatement, as the book suggests, but overstated on the side of truth: "It is the theologies of the enslaved will that have saved human liberty; it is the theologies of salvation by Another that have saved human morality; it is the theologies that said, 'God is all, man nothing' that have made of man a force, an energy, a power incomparable and divine."

Titles and Texts

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

J. H. Graham, St. James Methodist, Amory, Miss. "Dim out—no black out." John 1:5—*The Light shineth in darkness but darkness could not put it out.*

Daniel W. Stevens, Grace Methodist, Fresno, Calif. "The Man Nobody Can Forget." Phil. 2.9 (Moffatt)—*Therefore God raised him high and conferred on him a name above all names.*

J. Harold Jones, II, White Memorial Methodist, Little Rock, Ark. "Wolves in Sheep's Clothing." Matt. 7:15—*Beware of false prophets which come in sheep clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

J. W. Rafter, Hanson Place Baptist, Brooklyn, N. Y. "You Can Change the World!" II Kings 7:9—*We do not well: this is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.*

A. G. McDowell, Calvary Baptist, Cobourg, Ont., Canada. "Ancient Glory and Present Reality," Judges 6:13 *And Gideon said unto him . . . if the Lord be with us . . . where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of . . .? but now the Lord hath forsaken us. . . .*

By Herman J. Kregel

Memories

This do in remembrance of me. Luke 22:19.

SOME folks have dreams which drive them awake in screaming terror in the middle of their sleep. Some are like the great artist Raphael, who, when he was asked by a friend how he painted his wonderful pictures, said, "I dream dreams and I see visions and then I paint my dreams and my visions." But between the nightmares and the visions is where most of us find ourselves when we dream—if we dream at all. Memories are like that, too.

Memories can be among the most wonderful and beautiful and priceless things in the world. They can give us a lift on a dreary day. They can help us paint the clouds with sunshine when storms threaten our immediate horizon. They can often make the difference between folding up and forging ahead when life becomes unusually difficult. On the other hand, memories can be like baying hounds pursuing us with relentless and terrifying persistence through the swamps and jungles of a guilty conscience.

But even our most beautiful and best loved memories can sometimes do us hurt. Very often the vices of life are only overworked or unbalanced virtues. We might even say that vices are frequently virtues gone wrong. And a virtuous memory can often become a vicious burden. It is said that an unmistakable sign of old age, regardless of one's years, is the vice of constantly living in yesterday.

Memories In Old Age

Cherished memories of yesterday and the day before can give a twilight beauty to our declining years. They can furnish the cushion sometimes needed for softening the blows of adversity and the slowing-down process of time. But when a man or woman, no matter how old in years, lives only in reveries and memories of the past, he or she is living on worse than a starvation diet—is already dead even though no death certificate can legally be issued.

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It is not only people who are frequently dead though their bodies show signs of life. Organizations and institutions experience the same thing. And the church of Jesus Christ is no exception, much as we might wish otherwise. How many congregations and denominations there are which live only in the past and feed their starving souls with emotion-fraught memories of their vigorous founding fathers, only God knows. They are literally dead or dying because they have failed to rekindle the fires of memory with the fuel of a present working faith. Yet of more immediate and pressing concern to us as individuals is the question whether we are among those who are living exclusively in memory lane.

We may have had a glowing experience of Christian faith, but like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration we have perhaps tried to live in the never-never land of continuous ecstasy by refusing to come down to earth and put the vision into practice—and then we also have wondered why our new life failed to come up to its promises. Or we may be kidding ourselves into thinking that nothing has changed and that the memories of yesterday are the realities of today.

The Deep Freeze of Hyperorthodoxy

Or perhaps we have had a cataclysmic religious experience and come face to face with the Word of God in its dazzling brilliance. But then we worried exclusively about the dangers of intellectual and theological heresy, until we have become spiritually frozen in the deep freeze of a hyperorthodoxy, and have forgotten all about the fruits of the Spirit we should have been producing from day to day.

We've probably all met folks whose lips can spout all the theological clichés and whose minds are constantly busy spinning tight creeds and doctrinaire confessions, and who are forever damning the heresies of others not like-minded unto themselves in the minutest detail, but whose personal lives are living heresies, warped and twisted by pride and greed and selfishness and envy and any or all of the rest of the catalogue of sins. That is not to say that we can or should do without a bit more of doctrine or theology or whatever you care to call the attempted systematizing

of life and faith. Our current era of theological illiteracy and doctrinal ignorance is not only a shame, but a distinct danger to the church of Christ.

The handful of hardened hatefuls who cry "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name?" but whom the Lord never knew because they never seemed to know the Lord or to understand what he wanted of them, and the vast hordes of sloppy sentimentalists and callous or ignorant indifferentists who possess neither memories nor a living and dynamic faith—somewhere between these lies our only hope.

Our memories of Christ and what he has done in and with the lives of others as well as our own can be wings that lift us out of our dull, drab and dreary daily routine; or they can be a ball and chain to hobble us throughout this life.

Christ has Different Meanings

Christ means different things to different people, even as his Supper, called holy communion, means different things to different people. But there is still a lowest common denominator, an ineradicable minimum of meaning that binds us all together as we come to his table and acknowledge him as our Lord and Savior.

Coming together in memory of the Christ who went to Calvary; breaking bread together in the name of him of whom the angels sang, "And his name shall be Jesus because he shall save his people from their sins"; sharing the cup as we remember his words, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you"—this should mean far more than just another service, like a Decoration Day ceremony, which is forgotten almost before it is over.

Whatever else our coming together at the Lord's table may mean, it should remind us that Christ's coming into the world, and, more important still, into your life and mine, *has* made a difference. No matter what memories of Christ may be evoked as we think of hospitals and schools and mission fields and churches and all the transformations wrought in this world in his name, if we ourselves continue unchanged and our memories lack the personal touch, we still fail to measure up to the requirements Jesus had in mind when he said, "This do in memory of me."

There's a stanza or two that little children often repeat at Christmastime which carries a year-round message:

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If he's not born in thee,
Thy soul is still forlorn.

The Cross on Golgotha
Will never save thy soul;
The cross in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.

Words may change their meaning or be lost entirely. Institutions may rise and fall. Denominations may be born and flourish and wither away. Congregations may come and go. But the memories surrounding Christ in the minds of men can still refresh faith and rekindle hope. As we reach back into yesterday we discover the means to strengthen and brighten our own lives and the world of tomorrow.

Faith Refreshed

There is a legend about Zaccheus the publican which says that when he was old and still living in Jericho, he left his house every morning at dawn, and after a bit returned in a calmer and happier frame of mind. The routine never varied and the result never failed. His wife wondered about it, and one day stole out after him. She saw him go straight to the tree in which he sat the first day he saw the Lord. He took a crock and filled it with water and carried it to the tree. After working the soil and pulling out a few weeds, he watered the roots of that tree. Then he went back home, and from his home went out to serve both God and man.

Zaccheus not only kept his memories alive and refreshed, but used the little ceremony to strengthen his life as he went out trying to strengthen the lives of those who came into contact with him, and who could not help but see that it did make a difference that he had met and remembered his Lord. Ought we do less as we come to his table?

A Prayer

By Albert Bereczky

Bishop of the Reformed Church of Hungary, Budapest, Hungary

HUMBLY and gratefully do we stand before thee, O eternal, holy and omnipotent God. Never can we thank thee for the profuse wealth of thy benefits with which thou hast visited the life of each of us individually and the life of thy holy church, as plentifully bestowed as the universe is endowed with thy stars. How can we thank thee for the foundation and crown of thy benefactions, Jesus Christ, in whom thou hast given us thyself that in him we too might be thine.

Have mercy on us, so that all our joy and comfort at this moment and forever may be in him. Grant to us the wonder of listening to thy word and receiving it with an open heart. Through thy Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ thy Son. Amen.

If people in war can keep their motive pure, then they have a good chance to escape the spiritual consequence of killing. It may grieve them deeply to witness tragedy, but by maintaining a pure motive they can be like a surgeon who makes a painful wound. They can look beyond the pain and ugliness and be sustained in their task by a vision of new life to come.—*Virgil A. Kraft, Methodist Chaplain at the University of Chicago.*

The Red Shoes

By Robert Nelson Back

". . . Take heed, and beware of covetousness . . ." Luke 12:15.

"THE Red Shoes" is the name of one of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales, and it is also the title of a superbly wrought movie based on the Dane's fantasy. It is the story of Karen, a lovely but poor little girl who dreamed of owning a pair of red shoes. After her mother's death Karen went to live with a rich old lady. As the time grew near for Karen's confirmation, the old woman took her to buy clothes for the occasion. In a shoe shop, Karen saw what she had always wanted: beautiful, new, shining red shoes. She was allowed to purchase the shoes and she wore them at her confirmation. They attracted a great deal of attention because all the other boys and girls were wearing ordinary shoes.

The next Sunday at holy communion Karen wore her red shoes. Nothing in the world mattered to her now except her lovely shoes. As the chalice came to her lips, she imagined she saw the shoes reflected in the red wine. She forgot she was in church; she forgot everything except the shoes. After the service, out on the street, Karen started to dance in her new shoes. She found she could not stop dancing, for the shoes were stronger than her will. The old woman managed to get the shoes off her feet, and when they got home she hid them.

'Dance You Shall'

After the old woman died Karen found the shoes in a cupboard. She had not forgotten them for an instant. She put them on and danced down the street, through the town and into the woods. Then she became frightened and tried to tear the shoes from her feet, but they had grown fast. She met an angel who sternly said: "Dance you shall, dance in your red shoes until you are pale and cold and your flesh shrivels." Karen screamed for mercy, but she did not hear the angel's answer for her shoes had already swept her away.

Finally Karen spied the village executioner with his broad ax. She begged him to cut off her feet, for she knew she could be saved only if she were separated from the red shoes. The executioner struck off her feet, and the shoes with her feet in them went dancing into the night. Karen had to use crutches the rest of her life, but she was happy to be rid of her horrible obsession.

The story of the red shoes, like most fairy tales, teaches a grim lesson.

Jesus talked about red shoes, for red shoes are anything that so absorbs us, so monopolizes our love and passion that, unable to think of anything else, we become warped and weary creatures. Our obsessions are red shoes.

A man came to Jesus pleading, "Speak to my brother that he may divide the inheritance with me." Apparently the man was being cheated out of something that was rightfully his. But Jesus refused to help him. Deep beneath the surface of the request Jesus saw a pair of red shoes. The man was obsessed by getting the money, obsessed by the thought of what he would do with it after he got it. He was warped, unhealthy. Jesus said to him, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

An Insidious Evil

The love of money and the love of possessions are red shoes worn by many men. Nearly half of all the recorded words of Jesus relate to the use of money and possessions.

How did Jesus feel toward money? Sometimes he approved of wealth. He held up as an excellent example of stewardship the man who invested his talents to make more; he spoke slightingly of the man who refused to invest his talent and hid it instead; he complimented the woman who used the costly ointment. On the other hand, Jesus told Nicodemus to get rid of all he owned. It would seem that Jesus' attitude depended entirely on a man's use of his wealth and a man's thoughts concerning his wealth. If wealth were a pair of red shoes, an obsession, a reason for living, Jesus condemned it.

The pose of possessions can be an insidious evil, for we can have it without knowing it. The man who came to Jesus for assistance in securing his rightful inheritance was not aware of his love of money. Many, many people place their faith and hope in possessions. We cannot excuse ourselves by saying that we are not wealthy. Wealth is comparative. Jesus would remind us of the poor of the world, the displaced, those who have nothing. "You are rich by comparison," he would say.

Just before his death, Will Rogers wrote some

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thoughtful words. When America was settled, "in the fall of the year, if the founders could gather in a few pumpkins, some potatoes and some corn for the winter, they were in a thanking mood. But if we can't gather in a new car, a new radio, a tuxedo and some government relief, why we feel like the world is agin us."

Jesus would ask us to examine our attitude toward the things we possess. If we love them, he would command us to get rid of them. But if we know how to use them, he would want us to know that they are a gift from God. When death comes, or in any of the crucial "common ventures of life," our comfort and hope are in God, and in him alone. There is no pocket in a shroud. We are saved not by what we may have won but by what we believe and hope.

Our obsessions are red shoes, the things and the ideas that cloud our vision.

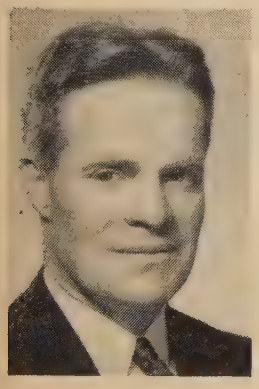
Edward Weeks, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, reminds us of the red shoes worn by Senator McCarthy. His "assassination by guesswork" has ruined men's careers and has become a cruel obsession with him. The senator, whose congressional immunity protects him from libel suits, imagines that certain men are Communists even when there is not a single fact to substantiate the belief. In the words of Senator Margaret Chase Smith, he has unloosed the "four horsemen of calumny—fear, ignorance, bigotry and smear."

Anything that clouds our vision, that keeps us from the truth, that obsesses us is a pair of red shoes. In the name of Christ, let us cut loose from these shoes before they dance us to destruction.

TREASURES IN THE TOWN DUMP

A Sermon for Children by Lewis H. Davis

ONE of the most interesting spots in any town is the town dump. We may not like to admit it, but it's always fun to go to the dump and see what other people have thrown away. There will be mountains of tin cans, blackened by the dump fires, old bedsprings, broken chairs, perhaps a child's teddy-bear, old stumps, a few rusty refrigerators, bottles of all descriptions—junk of all kinds, brought there and dumped because it wouldn't burn and there was nothing else to do with it.



Now if you have ever taken trash to the dump, you have noticed that the men who are in charge of the dump generally walk over and take a look at the things you have just brought. They know that people often throw away a good many things that can be made into something useful, with the use of a little imagination and elbow grease.

Then too, there are some people in every town who make trips to the dump once in a while to look over what other people have thrown away, for the same reason. Some very lovely things in the homes of our people have come from the town dump into somebody's workshop to be fixed, cleaned up, and painted. Perhaps you have known people who could point with pride to a chair, a table, and say, "Would you believe that came from the town dump?" It really gives you a thrill to make something useful or beautiful from what someone else has discarded as useless and of no earthly account.

Have you Juniors had this experience? Perhaps your Sunday School teacher or your day-school teacher asks your class a question and says, "Who knows the answer?" You think you know the answer but you are afraid it might be wrong, so you keep your hand down, and throw that answer away. Then your neighbor puts up his hand, gives exactly the same answer you have just thrown away, and gets the credit for it.

We honor the great people who have given us our great music, our great paintings, our cars, our planes, our trains—people who have gotten good ideas and worked on them until they produce something useful or beautiful. Do you know where most of these ideas came from? They came from the world's dump-heap of discarded ideas. James Watt wasn't the first man to think of the steam-engine. Columbus wasn't the first man to get the idea that the world was round, that by sailing west one would find land. Many of the themes of our greatest music are taken from old discarded compositions that had been thrown on the dump to be forgotten. Many of our great people are great because they found valuable ideas and truths among the things that others had discarded, and had the patience to restore them.

Jesus spent a good deal of time redeeming people that other people had, so to speak, thrown on the dump—Matthew, Zacchaeus, Mary, the lame, the halt, the blind—people that seemed hopeless, but in whom Jesus saw great possibilities. He knew that God had put good in every person. When we speak of Jesus as "Redeemer" we mean that, just as some people redeem and restore to usefulness things found at the dump, so Jesus, both then and now, redeems and restores people whom other people have discarded in their minds.

LEWIS H. DAVIS is minister of Prospect Methodist, Bristol, Conn., and president of the Bristol council of churches.

Pulpit Post

More Answers

SIR: Your September "Thought of the Month" intrigued me greatly. "How shall the preacher address his message to a society which once believed it but believes it no more?" There is no simple nor easy answer to this question, but with a sense of appreciation of the importance of the issue, and in deep humility, let me reply.

First we must expose the false and shoddy character of the ideas that underlie our secular civilization. It is time people were made aware of the menace of the shallow materialism, the worship of physical force and power politics, the class warfare, and all the other aspects of our secularism, which combined have led our society into one world depression and two world wars in the space of half a life time.

Second, we must learn how to meet the scientifically trained mind of today in the realm of reason and fact and demonstrate to it the truth of the Christian religion. It will avail us little to attack secularism unless we can set forth with clarity and with power the validity of the Christian faith and the spiritual interpretation of life. As T. R. Glover said of the early Christians, "We must outthink, outfight, and outlive our enemies."

Third, we must address ourselves more specifically and more directly to the real needs of people. Human beings will always follow those who minister to their actual needs, as witness the success of the men who have achieved competence in the field of psychotherapy and have combined it with religious insight, in the treatment of personality disorders. We must avoid irrelevance as we do the plague. We must earn the right to speak on social questions, controversial or not, by intellectual discipline and actual participation in movements, and then relate these questions to the eternal Gospel.

Finally, we must be prepared to pay the price of preaching a Gospel which at many points, and perhaps at most, runs counter to the cherished ideas and established loyalties of our cynical and secular society. Dissenters have never been popular with their generation. There is danger of persecution. But give us a group of Christians who are willing to live their Christianity as well as to preach it, and they will make an impression. What we really need is a new Apostolic age.

Grace Methodist, HENRY A. SIMMONS.
Norwood, Ohio.

SIR: Christianity has been regarded as a historical religion. The Pharisee's religion was a historical religion, but the religion of Jesus was definitely related to the present needs of the people to whom he talked. In studying the Bible we need to distinguish between what is history—which may or may not be factual—and what we are able to appropriate by faith as eternal truth.

The strategy for the preacher is to develop faith in God with reference to the contemporary scene and to regard the Bible as a book of clues, the prayerful study of which will inform us, not of historical facts, but of God's nature and will.

Kent, Ohio. C. BENJ. IRWIN.

SIR: Since unbelievers lack the Christian heritage, being biblically illiterate, the very phraseology of the minister must be changed. It will be necessary for him to speak in terms free from the traditional theological language which was familiar to a previous generation of believers.

The preacher should teach and preach that if man lives only for mere amusements or for sensual gratifications of physical comforts or any of the modern time passing activities, he must suffer the results. These will include frustration, unrest, dissatisfaction, in some cases insanity and sometimes suicide. Day after day our newspapers and radios carry stories which illustrate the tragedies resulting from trying to live without God.

Those who do not believe in the Christian gospel must be taught to see that man cannot rise to his highest self through a secular, that is, a Godless education. Technical and scientific progress without moral and spiritual insight and control can never save the individual or society. Incessant wars are but the inevitable result of a civilization which is going to pieces. Man must be made to see that it is only in accepting Christ's way of life that he can come into harmony with himself, God, his fellow men and the universe. On such a foundation only can cohesion, sanity and a cooperative world society be built.

First Presbyterian, ELMER L. SETTERLUND.
Albany, Mo.

Filing Problem

SIR: Would it be possible for you to print sermons so that we could cut them out and file them without destroying an equally good sermon that is on the back of the one we are filing but which we would wish to file in another place.

Our Saviour's Lutheran, MURLEY A. SEVERTSON.
Pequot Lakes, Minn.

(Sorry, but that would be impossible. But you can order another copy of that issue for 30 cents. THE EDITORS.

They Want Protestant Calendar

SIR: If you plan to continue to print the calendar of the church year in The Pulpit, why not use the calendar of the Protestant church instead of that of the Roman Catholic Church?

If you take the trouble to purchase a church year calendar from a Lutheran or Episcopalian publishing house and examine it, you will note that the Sundays after Trinity Sunday are designated "Sundays after Trinity" and not "Sundays after Pentecost."

St. John's Lutheran, CHAS. H. CORBETT.
Thurmont, Md.

SIR: . . . Unless I am greatly mistaken, you are using a Roman Catholic liturgical calendar, for both the chief liturgical churches of the Protestant communion, namely the Episcopal and the Lutheran, use the designation "after Trinity." Thus Sept. 3 is the "Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity."

Church of the Epiphany, LELAND STARK.
Washington, D.C.

We Have It!

SIR: The Calendar of the Christian Year originated in the Commission on Worship and has, of course, the formal endorsement of the Federal Council of Churches.

The work on The Christian Year was already done before I became associated with the commission. The leadership in the matter was furnished by Dr. Fred Winslow Adams, now deceased, who, you will remember, was a rather prominent Methodist minister. Serving on the commission at that time, as well as now, were representative Episcopalians and Lutherans.

The fundamental urge back of the new calendar was the realization that the traditional church year no longer fully meets the needs of our present day.

The secondary motive was to have a calendar which might appeal to the non-liturgical churches which were not accustomed to give much consideration to the traditional church year.

One of the major changes was the creation of the season

called Kingdomtide which was designed, as its name indicates, to celebrate more specifically the social obligation and opportunity of the Christian gospel. Under the traditional year the period between Pentecost and Advent was a long stretch of about six months which seemed to many people a rather barren area. This was an attempt to give it vital meaning. We retained as Whitsuntide the period from Pentecost to the last Sunday of August which begins Kingdomtide which leads up to Advent. As a kind of gesture of appreciation of the traditional year, the Sundays in both Whitsuntide and Kingdomtide are numbered as Sundays after Pentecost.

Another important consideration was the realization that the traditional church year had accumulated considerable "dead wood" of which good examples are: Septuagesima; Sexagesima; Quinquagesima. It was the purpose of our new calendar to cut out what seemed "dead wood" and leave the essential and fundamental observances of the Christian year.

Still another consideration was the introduction of the modern observances, such as: Universal Bible Sunday; Race Relations Day; World Day of Prayer; Rural Life Sunday; and so forth. As we all realize, the Christian church, at least in America, has been building a church year of its own by the establishment of these observances. This is exactly the same process that resulted in the formulation of the traditional church year. Occasions were felt to be necessary and so gradually found their place in the church schedule. Our commission felt that due regard should be given to this contemporary process and so these recent observances have been included with the ancient days.

Such are the ideas back of our Christian Year Calendar. We should like to see the liturgical churches modify their church year but this is a long process particularly when official action is required. As a matter of fact, many of the newer elements of the Christian year are being taken over by the liturgical churches. Some day we hope such practices will be so general that they will result in official changes and additions.

We appreciate, of course, the willingness of The Pulpit to go along with this forward step and trust it may be continued.

DEANE EDWARDS,
Secretary, Commission on Worship
Federal Council of Churches
297 Fourth Ave.
New York 10, N. Y.

Voice from the Northlands

SIR: I am away in the northland but look forward with great anticipation every month to the coming of The Pulpit. My field is 240 miles long and as far north almost as one wishes to go. The settlers are few and far between and yet they greet one with extreme heartiness whenever visited. Sometimes I have as many as 20 baptisms at a remote service, and weddings are delayed for the coming of the Padre. It is a great life and so rewarding in fine fellowships and loyalties.

May the Lord continue to bless you and give you the ability to write more of those great editorials.

All Saints Anglican, DUNCAN P. CAMERON.
McBride, B.C., Canada.

Sermon Summaries

New Year's Meditation

IN Joshua, the third chapter and the fourth verse, there is a little sentence that many ministers have used for a New Year's text: "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." Every new year may be a way that we have not journeyed before. However, just because we flip the calendar over and change from 1950 to 1951 it does not follow that we shall have either a new year or a happy one. Life can drift on, year after year, very much in the same old way.

It becomes a new year only as we make it so. Each of us chooses the road that he will walk in the unknown adventure of 1951. If it is to be a new year we shall make some new choices; otherwise it will just be the old year transplanted into 1951. Most of us make resolutions with our minds, but we never put our wills and our all back of these New Year's resolutions, and so we either leave them among the things that we plan on doing or think we should do, or else we half-heartedly make a start but never really follow through.

But think of how our choices can determine the kind of year it will be. Suppose that we decide to choose a new mood, one of friendliness, faith, hope, and carry it over into the new year. Then the oncoming days on the calendar will contain new friendships, new adventure and a way of fellowship. Each one of us chooses the attitude and the mood in which we live.

It can become a new year as we choose to leave some old fear or worry back in 1950. What happened to all the things you worried about as 1949 became 1950? I rather imagine that this morning you cannot even think of them. Time has gone on and you have discovered that for every day God has given you strength and for every moment there has been the glory of his grace. It can also become a new year through the things that we love. After all, what we really love determines our very life. Every minister has experienced the thrill that comes as some young person suddenly discovers what life may really mean. One day the young person just seems to be drifting along, lackadaisically, not caring overly much what may happen. Then he is brought face to face with some challenge. Perhaps a new love comes into his life. Perhaps for the first time he discovers that his life has value and meaning.

Yes, it becomes a new year with the fine gift of new affections. If we go on loving the same old things in the same old way, we can never have a new year. It is only as we make room in our hearts for some new affection, some new love, that the world grows and becomes larger, and we, in reality, discover a new year.

The world can never have too much of affection, good will and just downright neighborliness and kindness. Much of the preaching of Jesus had to do with this spirit. He talked of going the second mile. He preached the gospel of love. When he wished to show Christianity in a concrete way, he told the unforgettable story of the Good Samaritan. When Jesus talked about the Last Judgment, he gave to his disciples the unforgettable words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

I do not know what 1951 may hold in store for you or for me. The way is hidden in the eternal plan of God. But this I do know, that it may be a new year if you in turn will allow Christ to give you a new spirit of hope and faith and love as you enter into the new day ahead. — *Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

Faith to Live

Got any rivers they say are uncrossable?
Got any mountains they can't tunnel through?
We specialize in the wholly impossible,
We do the things that no one can do.

THIS WE ARE TOLD was sung by the builders of the Panama Canal. In this last war, we would sometimes see a little motto on the walls of Seabee headquarters in some distant spot:

> The difficult we do at once.
> The impossible takes a little longer.

Both sayings are typical of America. And they are based on faith—faith in

God, faith in ourselves, faith in our fellow men—a very real religious faith going back to the Pilgrims of New England, the Quakers of Pennsylvania, and many others.

A few years ago, someone put out a questionnaire. He found that 92 per cent of those he asked, "believed in God" in some vague way. Half that many, 46 per cent, believed God might help them in time of trouble and had some sense of his presence. Recently I was talking to a new boy at the naval station—as I like to do when new men report for duty. I asked him about his church—and he said he hadn't been to church in a long time. Even during the war, he said, when almost everyone went to services before a certain invasion, he didn't go. I agreed with him that occasional religion is of no great value. To mean much, religion must be a part of our lives all the time.

Some people seem to think religion offers a sort of guarantee of success and prosperity. This is a strange idea. The Founder of our religion was a most abject failure, in his lifetime, by ordinary standards. He had a lot of friends among the common people, but the leaders of his people hated him and eventually had him killed. He was publicly executed on a cross—a cruel form of execution reserved for those not Roman citizens. Yet today the cross has become the central symbol of One who taught us to love God and our neighbors and who died for that faith. And so he lives, revealing God to us.

We need a faith that will enable us to live as men or, if need be, to die as men. — *Chaplain Wendell Wheeler, U.S. Naval Station, Orange, Tex.*

When Mourning is Better Than Mirth

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.—Matt. 5:4.

JESUS' thought ran to a particular kind of mourning—for one's own shortcomings, for the world's evil that hinders the doing of God's will. But how do such mourning in particular and mourning in general lead to blessedness? What comfort is there?

Out of mourning for one's personal failure can come a fresh appreciation of God's grace as it is sought and received. We're so made that we cannot be satisfied with an impenitent life. "The soul that has no sorrow for its sins is shut out from any true paradise."

In taking upon ourselves the burdens of distressed men and women, we have less time to be concerned about our own troubles. The most miserable people are always those who center attention upon themselves and shun the cares of others in the attempt to win personal happiness. On the contrary, the people who deliberately take on themselves the trouble and pain of others find happiness, so that, strange and contradictory as it appears, the happiest people are those who care until it hurts.

To those who mourn comes the comfort wisdom gives, the comfort of a deep entrance into the pathos and greatness of life. It is said of Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, "Her hazel eyes seemed to have experienced all possible tragedy and to have mounted pain and suffering like steps into a high calm and a superhuman understanding." Even a spell of illness, which lays us by for a while and gives us a chance to think, can be comforting in fresh insight concerning life's real values.

Those who mourn can be comforted by spiritual companionship with the greatest souls—men and women who could not look on wrongdoing and suffering without being deeply stirred. In the Old Testament, when we feel the burden of the world's disloyalty to God, our spiritual companion is Moses.

Those who mourn will be comforted by renewed assurances that God remains in control of his world. "God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36). Here is the deepest source of comfort: that God could make the crucifixion of his Son the channel for the greatest revelation of himself and the greatest outpouring of his power.— *J. Francis F. Peak, First Baptist, Wildwood, N. J.*

Hymns for Today

Sharing the Cross

Eucharist. L. M.

O God, since thou hast shared my pain,
How can I live for self again?
I ask not for myself this day,
But for my brothers, Lord, I pray.

My brothers crushed and bleeding lie,
My broken brothers bleeding die.
O God, for them I pray to thee;
I share in their Gethsemane.

Crushed on the wheels that men have made,
My brothers, Lord; give aid! give aid!
Broken of heart and starved of mind,
How shall they know that God is kind?

My Father, who didst share my pain,
Seek'st thou a way their hearts to gain?
Cans't thou come through my heart and mind
To tell the story, God is kind?

O love of God in Christ who died!
I die with him the crucified.
I bleed for these that they may live;
O give them life, my Father, give!

JOHN W. SHACKFORD.

Call to the Church

Munich. 7.6.7.6.D

O CHURCH of God's own Spirit,
Arise and take thy place
Amid the thronging nations
To lend thy light and grace.
All men await thy coming
To change their night to day,
To bring God's truth and justice
And show the better way.

Though greed and hate still linger
To curse the groping world,
Take up God's peaceful battle
With banners bright unfurled.
Thou goest not unaided,
For he shall give thee power
To win for him the triumph
In this his destined hour.

Awake, O Church! Our Master
Leads on to battles new.
No longer doubt his lordship,
But seek his will to do.
Let all who claim his leading
Go forth in faith secure
And build for him a Kingdom
That shall fore'er endure.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

Crusaders, On!

A hymn for the Air Force

Crusader's Hymn. 5.6.8.5.5.8.

O God, our Father,
To Thee we lift our prayer:
Be with Thy sons who skyward fare.
Give to them courage;
Give to them daring—
Flying crusaders of the air.

Bless Thou the pilots;
Guide the navigators;
In Thy safekeeping be the crews.
Save them from peril,
Save them from plane-wreck—
Crusaders of th'ethereal blue.

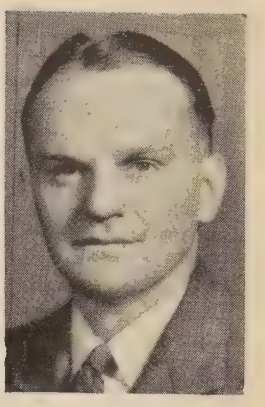
Grant to the ground crews
Full knowledge, patient skill.
Endow with wisdom and with care
All the inspectors,
All the mechanics,
Who make their crafts safe for the air.

Be theirs the vision
Of a new day dawning.
For all mankind, let warring cease!
From their lost comrades
Hear they the challenge,
"Crusaders, on! Safeguard the Peace!"

GARLAND EVANS HOPKINS.

Popular Athens, Ohio, Pastor Gives Timely Suggestions For Enlivening Sermons

By Fred E. Luchs



'People' Your Sermons

PEOPLE are free. In fiction, poetry, drama or sermon writing you can choose and cull from the universe. You can reach down into the slums or step up into the heavens and find your characters. Take your choice. Do you want a bitter cynic from the sophisticated set, or a Fate-bitten drunkard from the Bowery, or an innocent youth from the hills? Choose.

But do we? We ministers toil over our sermons laboriously selecting "six abstract reasons for being good." At our side stand six or sixty people ready to get into the game. But we let them shiver on the sidelines. What interference they could run for us bowling over the powers of evil! There they sit awaiting the call of the coach while our sermon gropes in the world of the ethereal and abstract, fighting a losing battle with the ear and the mind of the man in the pew. He may cock an ear as we list the first sermon for morality, but before the end he gets lost in the meshes of our logic. Listening comes hard when he finds no handles.

Follow Through

When we begin our sermons, as we sit at our desks, we must first follow through an idea to its intelligent conclusion. When Phidias carved, he saw first the noble idea embedded in the stone. Then he went on to put lifeblood into his art object. Ministers must walk the same creative pathway. We must base our sermons on high thoughts. But when we proffer those ideas to the man in the pew, we must "people" them. If we fail, he cannot quickly grasp our spiritual nuggets. He must dig through too much logic.

I never asked Mary Elizabeth Sergent how she wrote her much discussed *Christian Century* article "Why Aren't They Like Us?" Surely she laid hold on the idea before she found her characters. She saw the tragic results of haphazard religious home training. Had she chosen the abstract method of telling her story, she might have added one more rejection slip to her journalistic career. But no! She "peopled" her idea. Thousands of reprints of that story have been sold.

Galsworthy laid hold on an idea. He saw people making first loyalties out of second- and third-rate values. He did not mount a soapbox and harangue the masses. He merely "peopled" his idea. He let his characters select cheap loyalties. Watch them choose. DeLevis takes race; Dancy embraces his own limited self-interest; Twisden gives his highest allegiance to the legal profession. Club members pay obeisance to their clubs; soldiers give their first loyalties to their companions in arms. The author then throws these characters with their loyalties into life's cauldron. Look at the result—tragedy. Galsworthy's ideas will be read by large audiences because he "peopled" them.

Avoid Irritating

Here is the reason our social gospel sermons often irritate rather than educate. We can preach on "three reasons why we need racial equality." We do. Up goes the blood pressure of our congregation; down goes our effectiveness. Why did we not in that sermon show what harm contemporary mores inflict on Negro Clem Jones, on his family and on society? Picture his plight looking for a job as he gets a red light at every door. Let them see his wife working in a white home every day from 10 a.m. until early evening. Where are their children if both parents must earn the daily bread? If these children roam through the slums and walk into trouble, does the pew sitter gladly pay the court bills?

When we picture these Negroes in their miseries, the laymen need not be told that here is sin. They see it and feel it for themselves. Truth is brought home to them not by pulpit-thumping or by flaying lifeless dummies, but by dramatic portrayal. "People" your sermons and the congregation will identify themselves imaginatively with your characters. We preach abstractly about man. Harriet Beecher Stowe preaches about "Uncle Tom." *Tobacco Road* does not choose man; it selects Jeeter Lester. *Grapes of Wrath* gives no statistics; it pictures the Joad family. John Hersey did not pound the pulpit about the sin of dropping atomic bombs. He led us into the lives of six individuals. Their experiences of terror and devastation became our own. Earl Koos entered into friendly relations with a number of families on New York's east side and with the sociologist's perception made clear the sources of family weaknesses and strengths. Look at the literary result—*Families in Trouble*. When President Conant wrote his *On Understanding Science* he did not present science abstractly as a method of observation and hypotheses-making. He let us see scientists at work. What were their problems? How did they tackle them? How were they solved?

Write next Sunday's sermon that way.

Pulpit Calendar

Jan. 1—New Year's Day; Festival of the Christening.
Jan. 5—Twelfth Night; Epiphany Eve.
Jan. 6—Epiphany.
Jan. 6-13—Universal Week of Prayer.
Jan. 7—First Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 14—Second Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 19—Lee's Birthday.
Jan. 21—Third Sunday after Epiphany.
Jan. 28—Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 1—National Freedom Day.
Feb. 2—Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.
Feb. 4—Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 7—Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 9—World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 11—First Sunday in Lent; Race Relations Day.
Feb. 12—Lincoln's Birthday.
Feb. 18—Second Sunday in Lent; Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 18-25—Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 22—Washington's Birthday.
Feb. 25—Third Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 4—Fourth Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 11—Passion Sunday.
Mar. 18—Palm Sunday.
Mar. 18-24—Holy Week.
Mar. 22—Maundy Thursday.
Mar. 23—Good Friday.
Mar. 24—Easter Eve.
Mar. 25—Easter.

SEASONS: Christmastide, Epiphany, Lent, Eastertide.

ALTAR COLORS: Christmastide, white; Epiphany, white; Lent, violet; Maundy Thursday, white; Good Friday, black; Easter Eve, bare or black; Easter, white.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of nationwide or denominational significance.)

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'I Have Reason to Believe'

SEVERAL times during the past months in sermons and addresses by various preachers one particular phrase has caught my attention. It is: "I have reason to believe"—Each time these words have been a derailing switch, and by the time I got back on the track the preacher was far ahead of me. Each time my first thought was: "Now he's at it again. It isn't fair. Why doesn't he tell us what his reasons are?" For in each case, as it happened, the particular statement which these mystic words sponsored did not seem to me warranted by any evidence that I knew of. And I always have the uneasy fear that sometime I shall disgrace myself and upset the decorum of the gathering by interjecting the query: "Good sir, won't you tell us what the reasons are?" So far I have refrained, and, being a very conservative man, I probably shall so continue; but it does things to me, and I shiver at the thought of what may be happening to my subconscious, if the late lamented Dr. Freud be right in his insistence that impression without expression leads invariably to repression, and I am thus in the perilous situation of having a little crop of complexes developing, to burst out in a cancer at some dread future date.

The point is, do we use that convenient phrase when we have the evidence? More and more I doubt it. When we have the evidence, we cite it; when we don't, we say it is "obvious" or "self-evident" or, if we are in the pulpit, that we "have reason to believe" it. I am about convinced that in most speaking and writing such words and phrases are in direct proportion to our vigorous—often, I fear, our dogmatic—insistence, and not infrequently our wishful thinking or wistful hope, that this or that is so, and in inverse proportion to the facts and other evidence available.

Why, we even do it in the so-called exact sciences. I have always loved mathematics—an algebraic problem is still a far more effective way of relaxing and wooing sleep than even the bloodiest charm of the latest Whodunit—but as a high school sophomore I had my first great disillusionment with regard to exactness in any sphere. It was the miserable little axioms which we had to memorize at the very start and then recite as "self-evident" truth that first impaired my faith. Many of the theorems in geometry seemed to me equally "self-evident"—that from any point in a straight line in a plane one perpendicular, and only one, can be drawn; that all right angles are equal; that vertical angles too are always equal. Why should we have to prove the theorems but not the eleven axioms which we docilely learned? The answer, I discovered one fall day now far in the yesteryears, was that we just couldn't prove the axioms; we had to assume them or the show couldn't go on.

Probably every field of investigation—and religion is surely one of them—must have a few axioms; but it certainly seems a solid principle that the fewer there are of them the better. As I think back over the years of the number of things I have designated as "obvious," I shiver a bit. Many of them are in print and can't be altered. I have the disquieting feeling that had I been able to demonstrate the particular point, I should probably have done so instead of side-stepping it.

Which brings me back to my initial lament. I wish preachers would be a little more chary of that easy phrase "I have reason to believe." It is easy to retort: "There is no time in every sermon to prove every point—people are aggrieved now if twelve o'clock finds them still in the pews." Quite true, alas; and at some more convenient occasion a few feeling words will probably appear in this column anent the modern taste for the quick lunch in the restaurants, the readers' digests and the meetinghouses of our land. The natural reply—I had almost written the "obvious" reply—would be: We try to cover too much ground in most of our sermons. The religious illiteracy of our people would probably be drastically lessened if we grappled with the task of showing them—after first showing ourselves—the real reasons for more of our beliefs instead of jauntily side-stepping them with the impressive: "Such knowledge is not for you, for you have not had a theological training in the arcana of religion, and have not been ordained. If you had, you'd see my reasons."

A Special New Year Memo

To The Minister—or To His Leading Layman

There is something about a book of daily devotions—any book of daily devotions—that helps keep the average Christian on an even keel. Last September Harper published a book to meet that need: TODAY IS MINE, edited and compiled by the beloved poet and editor THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

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Why not suggest TODAY IS MINE (we are assuming that you have already seen a copy) to your congregation for their daily reading beginning January 1, 1951? It will be a year-round source of spiritual enrichment—and a gift of real thoughtfulness. Copies are available at your favorite bookstore.

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *Grandpa and the Grindstone*

GRANDPA was a Southern Methodist preacher. He had come out of the War Between the States along with Old Man Jed Isbell. Grandpa became a preacher, but Old Man Jed Isbell would never even come to church. Grandpa would visit and chat with Jed, always ending the conversation, "When you coming to church, Jed?" Jed's eyes would look shrewd. "Well, just as soon as you get God to plow the bottom land, parson," or some such thing.

One day Old Man Jed Isbell bought himself the first store-bought grindstone. There it was sitting right in the middle of Clem McCullougha's hardware store, with all the Saturday crowd around, including Grandpa. Grandpa was just about ready to leave when, sort of automatic-like, he said, "When you coming to church, Jed?" Old Man Isbell lowered his head and sort of grinned and said, "When the Lord starts turning this here grindstone for me, parson."

I suppose nothing would have happened if somebody hadn't laughed. This stirred up Grandpa and he turned around slowly and said, "Jed Isbell, do you mean that after all the Lord has done for you, you would have him turn that grindstone before you would believe in him?" "I guess that's just about the size of it, parson." Grandpa spoke low: "Hitch up your wagon. Take that grindstone to my church, Jed. Then you come to church tomorrow night and I'll see what the Lord will do for you."

There wasn't a sound anywhere in that store when Grandpa walked out, but all the rest of the day people were talking about it. When church time came on Sunday the Presbyterians and Baptists as well as the Methodists were on hand. There, right in front of the altar, was the bright new grindstone. Old Satan himself couldn't have attracted any more attention. Soon Old Man Jed Isbell drove up in his wagon and walked into the church, turkey-red in the face. Everybody was breathless, waiting.

Well, sir, they sang some songs. Grandpa got up and preached a sermon and he said: "I've never done much calling on the Lord for miracles. I've always wanted to help the Lord instead of calling on him to help me. But now I'm going to ask him to take a hand. Let us pray." And Grandpa prayed. He went on and on. At last he said: "You sent me, Lord, a call to go out over this land and preach the gospel. I've always tried to do that. I know if you can't help me you will be on my side and I'll just be helping you." And Grandpa pointed to the grindstone. Nobody stirred. Then a light breeze cut through the church and the treadle of the grindstone began to move—ever so slowly, but it moved, moved faster and faster and faster. There was a sound of whispering in the church. Then the grindstone fell over.

"Jed," said Grandpa, "are you satisfied?" Jed nodded. "Jed, you're a fool. You'd let a mere grindstone persuade you to have faith in the love of God. But God was with you when you had shot and shell all around you at Lookout mountain, and when your son Rufe took sick and you cried because the city doctor told you he'd never walk again. But he is walking. Who did that, Jed? All faith means is thanking God for loving us so much that he does things we can't do for ourselves."

Then Grandpa stooped and from the grindstone's treadle he took a black fishing line. The line had gone through a hole in the floor and over to the windmill outside. Grandpa said: "God caused the wind to blow. But I don't think it's important that it turned the grindstone. We give thanks because the breeze turns the windmills up and down this valley, the breeze pumps the water for our stock. God and I together turned the grindstone. I had no right to shoulder off the whole load on God." And Grandpa turned to Jed and said: "Here's the miracle, Jed—this string, my two hands and God." Then Old Man Jed got up and walked to the pulpit and poked out his calloused hand, and Grandpa took it. Grandpa smiled, Jed smiled, and God in his high heaven must have been smilling too. The breeze blew so hard it rattled the windows of Grandpa's church.

That is how the love of God becomes clear to folks. When it does, hope is confirmed and faith sustained, and both are bound together in serenity. It may be the miracle of the grindstone; it may be the miracle of sunshine; it may be the miracle of the love we bear our children. But whatever it is there is within us now the love of God that makes God smile and that can bring peace and serenity to our hearts in spite of things.—*Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

• *Alternatives for the Twentieth Century*

MY mind turns back to an incident I have read about which occurred at the birth of the 20th century. Ministers, teachers and dreamers had high hopes for this century. They knew that we stood on the threshold of new discoveries in science, and they believed that science would become our savior. They knew that we stood on the threshold of new economic discoveries, and they believed that economics might redeem our day. They knew that we stood on the threshold of new discoveries in transportation which would make the world one, and they believed that this breaking down of space barriers would also break down the barriers of creed and mind. So as the 19th century faded away celebrations were held around the world to usher in the 20th century—and the millennium.

In Boston crowds gathered in the streets. Up and down Beacon hill they marched, singing and making revelry as only a New Year's crowd can do. On the stroke of twelve, thousands thronged Boston Commons for a service of worship to usher in the new century. Edward Everett Hale of renowned fame was the speaker for the occasion. But he made no speech. With the wind whipping his cloak about him, he arose, held up both hands and with earnestness pronounced the words: "O Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

In commenting, the Boston papers said that it was the finest tribute to the new day that might be paid, for the preacher was simply saying that unless the 20th century became the century of the God of the Ages, it would be a century at the mercy of the age.—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

• *Time Changes Our Ideas*

HISTORY reveals that ideas of right and wrong vary rather drastically from generation to generation. On July 11, 1804, in the state of New Jersey, Aaron Burr, the vice-president of the United States, mortally wounded Alexander Hamilton in a duel with pistols. At that time dueling was not uncommon and was looked upon as a proper means to avenge one's wounded pride or honor. Today we in the United States consider dueling morally and legally wrong.

George Washington, the first president of the United States, owned slaves who did all the hard labor and helped him to live in regal splendor. I visited Washington's home and saw the beautiful house in which he resided and the hovels in which his slaves lived. Slavery was not considered wrong in Washington's day. Today we consider slavery in any form a violation of man's inherent rights. We fought for many principles in this last war; one of them was to free the slaves Hitler had made of many Europeans.

Many preachers two or three dec-

ades ago preached sermons against women's bobbing their hair and wearing short skirts. Today bobbed hair is not considered wrong; of course, short skirts have passed for the moment, but certainly not because of their being wrong. In fact, when the "new look" came in after World War II a preacher in Washington, D. C., gained nationwide attention by saying that the long skirts were immoral because they used extra material which was greatly needed to clothe the many victims left naked by war on the continent of Europe.—*Charles H. Bright, Jr., Community Methodist, Maple Heights, Ohio.*

• *Home Missions Problem*

THE President of the United States has asked for congressional approval for what has been called his "Point Four program" to improve the "backward areas" of east Asia and the south Pacific. "Civil rights" is a perennial question in Washington. We must not overlook the responsibility of the church while waiting for government action.

The home mission topic for Protestant churches for 1950-51 is the rural church, including the rural churches of our Negro population. A recent survey of 570 Negro rural churches in eight southern states disclosed that the average Negro rural pastor finished the ninth grade in school. Only 8.2 per cent of these men live within their parish. Their average annual salary is $786 and the average layman pays 27 cents a month on salary. Over half the church buildings are valued at less than $3,000. Three churches out of four have only one room. Half of them need painting. One out of five has a roof that leaks. Only 15.4 per cent of these 570 churches use the every-member canvas.

The average Negro farm home is 12.7 miles from a high school, and school buses for Negroes are limited. The average home is 19.4 miles from a hospital, but only four miles from a "juke joint."

Two of the Negro pastors belonged to an interracial ministerial alliance. This entire study has been printed in a pamphlet entitled, *These Are My Brethren* (Rural Church Dept., Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, N. J., 40 cents).—*Ralph A. Felton, Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, N. J.*

• *When the Nations Are Shaken*

"MY GOD," prayed Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, martyred in the second century by Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic emperor who held Christianity with its loose talk of brotherhood and humility and peace in cold contempt—"my God, in what a century thou hast caused me to live!" Many a sensitive man prays that prayer of protest today. But it is precisely when the nations are shaken that the things which cannot be shaken become crystal clear, one of which is the redeemed and dedicated Christian personality, whose dedication can almost invariably be traced back to some unforgettable moment of high and holy vision.—*Walter A. Scholten, Arlington Reformed, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.*

• *Love Can Work Miracles*

A FEW years ago the playmates of three-year-old Mike Rector playfully tied him up and set fire to his clothes. Seventy per cent of his skin was burned, and the doctors gave his parents no hope. Some time later *Life* magazine ran a picture of Mike surrounded by 35 people—doctors, nurses, blood donors, Red Cross workers and parents—and samples of the medical equipment that had "saved his life." The story, captioned "A Medical Miracle Saves Mike Rector," began: "The fight for Mike Rector's life was one that no doctor or drug or treatment

(Continued on page 27)

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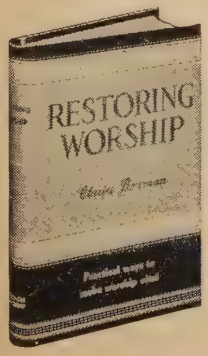

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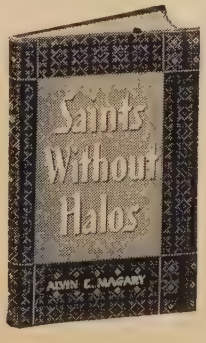

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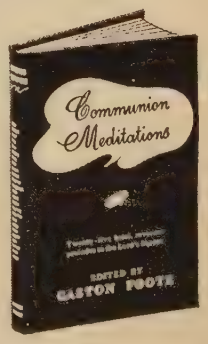

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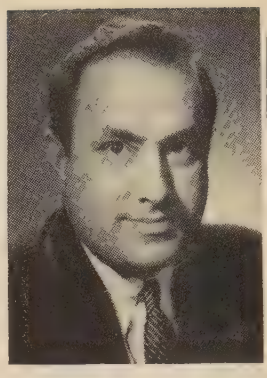


Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

PAUL knew a lot about average churches. Since Ephesus and Colossae have their modern counterparts in First Church and Old Ebenezer, a study of his letters to these congregations can still teach us a great deal.

Take this matter of church music, for example. The apostle exhorts the members of those early churches to "speak, teach and admonish each other in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). He knew that a person "filled with the Spirit" would be anxious to express his feelings in stanzas and harmonies consistent with his faith, instead of relegating that privilege to the choir. Chances are these churches were too small to spare a few sopranos and altos for a choir nucleus. Maybe they were too poor to pay someone to do their singing for them. Without musical instruments or instrumentalists, they either had to make music themselves or do without. Hence the apostle's advice.

Knowing the varieties of spiritual experience that make sinners turn to God, he refused to compel all his "children in Christ" to express their religious feelings in the same way. The "Brighten the Corner" and "Trust and Obey" Christians were not forced to start a mission across the tracks because the "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "O God Our Help in Ages Past" Christians wanted nothing to do with spiritual songs. Nor did he believe that the psalm singers should get angry with the hymn singers for introducing into public worship poems of the post-Davidic period.

With all our vaunted appreciation of William James and his understanding of conversion and Christian growth, most ministers have woefully, lamentably and stubbornly failed to apply his conclusions to congregational singing. First Church is just as much to blame for insisting on psalms and hymns as is Old Ebenezer for using only the spiritual songs. One might more easily force the Westminster Catechism down the reluctant throat of a third-generation Methodist than persuade some pastors to be as sensible as Paul and grant psalms, hymns and spiritual songs equal prominence in corporate worship.

James advises the merry to sing psalms (Jas. 5:13). Jesus, after instituting the Last Supper, led the disciples in singing a hymn (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26). Aside from the above-mentioned passages in Paul, this is the only time the word "hymn" occurs in the New Testament, though some will argue that even here the word should be translated "psalm." The Old Testament abounds in exhortations to "sing unto the Lord a new song." The early church prospered because every member's particular type or variety of religious experience was recognized, from the John Newton type, with its autobiographical "Amazing Grace," to the John Whittier type, with its equally autobiographical "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind." The Whittiers weren't forced to limit their musical expression to the Newton stanzas, nor were the Newtonians made to submit to a strict diet of Whittier hymns.

For the metrical versions of the Old Testament psalms, there must always be a place in public worship. They constituted the first hymnal. The works of Isaac Watts are excellent examples, while James Montgomery's version of the twenty-third psalm and "The Spacious Firmament on High" by Joseph Addison (of the *Spectator's* Addison and Steele) have rarely been surpassed in English literature.

Since the coming of Christ set the world singing again after the lapse of centuries, Christians have been writing their own hymns, religious poems with the outward and upward look, addressed to, or descriptive of, one of the members of the Trinity. The stanzas of Charles Wesley afford very fine examples. "Jesus Thou Joy of Loving Hearts," from the Middle Ages, and the modern "God of Grace and God of Glory" link the centuries in praising the same God and worshiping the same Christ.

Believers of another type, equally sincere, have looked within their own hearts at their sorrows and joys, struggles and triumphs, and have written the spiritual songs. These are religious poems with the inward personal look. Fanny Crosby, the most prolific writer of this school, provides the best examples. "I Need Thee Every Hour" and "Jesus Keep Me

Near the Cross" are universal favorites.

Let it be Palestrina for the choir, if you insist. But let it be Paul for the congregation, with a balanced musical diet of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Pulpit Paragraphs

(Continued from page 25)

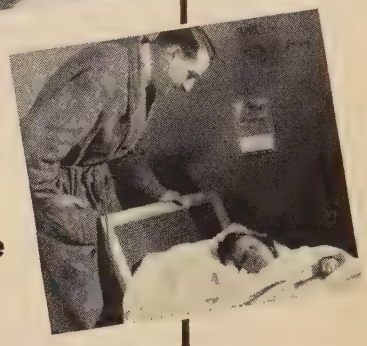
could have won alone." What was the mysterious power that saved this lad's life? The story reveals it in these words: Without the constant presence of his parents and the warmth of their affection, he might well have lost his will to live." This same warmth of affection that gives the will to live was in doctor, nurse, blood donor, Red Cross worker, as well as in his parents.

Man and God and all the starry hosts of heaven are looking on a distraught little earth today. What can we do to save it? we ask. Scientific and diplomatic "know-how," to be sure. But there is only one saving agent potent enough to save our world and us. It is the love of God revealed in Christ and shed abroad in the hearts of scientists, statesmen, churchmen, and all the rest of us. God's love calls the prodigal home from afar, it sends the sinner forth to sin no more, it gives us the will to live and to live together, abundantly and magnanimously.—*Sherrill B. Biggers, Kilgo Methodist, Charlotte, N. C.*

• *God Is Our Compass*

SEVERAL weeks ago I had occasion to drive to a lake some 40 miles away. On the way back, we thought we would go through a country club located on the banks of another lake, and one of the most beautiful spots in a county of lakes and scenic spots. The road winds around and around and finally emerges some five or six miles from where you enter it. Everything seemed familiar until I came to a T-road and began my turn. Someone suggested I was turning the wrong way, but I was sure of myself. Presently I found myself along a railroad and soon a train passed. The name was very familiar, but for some reason I became interested in the direction in which it was going. I looked at my compass. I was headed exactly opposite from the way I wished to go. I had had the compass all the time, but just didn't pay any attention.

Many times our lives are headed in the wrong direction. People tell us about it, but we do not listen. We have the Great Compass with us, but we do not pay any attention. Then somehow, sometimes, we are headed the wrong way. It would be so much wiser to seek God's guidance more often!—*Fred R. Conkling, Congregational Christian, North Manchester, Ind.*



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AWARDS

First Selection

An award of $100 cash and an all-expense trip to Chicago to preach the Seminarian sermon of the year at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, May 27, 1951. The sermon will also be published in The Pulpit.

Second Selection

An award of $50 cash and a 5-year subscription to The Pulpit.

Third Selection

An award of $25 cash and a 3-year subscription to The Pulpit.

And Seven Honorable Mention Selections each receiving an award of a two-year subscription to The Pulpit

RULES GOVERNING THE SELECTION

1. Any student of a participating theological seminary in the United States or Canada who is less than thirty (30) years of age is eligible for selection.
2. A participating theological seminary is one which notifies The Pulpit in writing not later than March 15, 1951 that, by official action of the faculty, the seminary desires to participate in the selection and agrees to the following rules:
   (a) Each participating seminary will appoint a local committee of judges, composed of not less than three (3) members, who shall carefully consider all candidates for the selection.
   (b) Candidates shall be judged on the following bases: content and construction of sermon submitted, 60 percent; delivery and pulpit poise, 30 percent; personableness of the candidate, 10 percent.
   (c) All sermons must be original and not previously published.
   (d) The local committee of judges will nominate to The Pulpit not later than April 1, 1951 the names of not more than three (3) eligible candidates for the selection together with the sermon submitted by each of the candidates, in duplicate typewritten copies, and a statement of not more than 200 words describing each candidate's delivery, pulpit poise and personableness. All nominations will be addressed to The Board of Judges, c/o The Pulpit, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. All manuscripts submitted become the property of The Pulpit. None will be returned.
3. No nominations postmarked later than midnight, April 1, 1951 will be eligible for consideration.
4. The selection of the Seminarian Preacher of the Year will be made by a Board of Judges whose decisions will be final.

Inquiries Concerning the Selection should be addressed to

THE PULPIT

407 S. DEARBORN STREET **CHICAGO 5, ILLINOIS**

Preachers in Print

More Quantity Than Quality

IF you have any doubt that preachers throughout the English-speaking world are badly in need of an up-to-date, readable treatise on sermon construction, take a week off and visit with the editors of The Pulpit. It would take only a week of reading run-of-the-mill sermon submissions to convince you that somebody should write such a volume and that the denominations should hasten to get it into the hands of their preachers.

Evidently the publishers have recognized this need. Over the past few months they have done their best to meet it. But their efforts have been unavailing. The up-to-date, readable general consideration of sermon construction is still to be written. The best book in the field remains **John A. Broadus'** ★★★★ON THE PREPARATION AND DELIVERY OF SERMONS, first published in 1870. (Our copy was printed by George H. Doran in 1898. There have been numerous reprintings in recent years.) If you already own that volume, you will find **Phillips Brooks'** ★★★LECTURES ON PREACHING, delivered at the Yale Divinity School in 1877, valuable supplementary reading. Zondervan (Grand Rapids) has performed a real service by its recent reprinting of this classic. Augsburg (Minneapolis) has contributed its bit in attempting to meet the need by reprinting **Michael Reu's** HOMILETICS: A MANUAL OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PREACHING (English translation by **Albert Steinhaeuser**).

THE weakest point in midcentury preaching is the inability of most preachers to prepare and deliver biblical expositions. Out of any hundred sermons submitted to The Pulpit not more than three will be exegetical. And it is rare to find one of the three worthy of inclusion in a journal that professes to print "the best in contemporary preaching." **Faris Daniel Whitesell** is an extremist who believes that "the only proper preaching for the Christian pulpit is that preaching grounded upon the Bible, centered in the Bible and saturated with the Bible." Few congregations would want a steady diet of exegetical preaching. But most congregations want considerably more such preaching than they are getting. Biblical preaching does not have to be solely exegetical, as **Clarence Edward Macartney** points out in his introduction to Whitesell's book. But don't let Macartney mislead you when he writes, "How tame compared with [biblical preaching] are such contemporary themes as Rent-Control, Housing, Race Equality, Communism and the Atom Bomb!" It is not a case of "either-or." Congregations are hungry for "both-and." If you will take the foreword, introduction and Chapter I with two grains of salt, you will find Whitesell's ★★THE ART OF BIBLICAL PREACHING (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, $2.00) timely and helpful.

STRICTLY supplementary to the fuller coverage given in such basic volumes as Broadus and Reu are three other recent books. PREACHING IN THE GREAT TRADITION by **Ray C. Petry** (Westminster, Philadelphia, $2.00) gives brief and sketchy consideration to the relation of preaching to each of several other functions of the ministry as conceived by those who preached in the "great tradition." These Crozer lectures for 1949 should be read only after reading the author's ★★★NO UNCERTAIN SOUND (Westminster, $4.50), to which it is a companion volume. THE PARSON PREACHING, by **Clement F. Rogers** (Macmillan, $2.00), contains a valuable chapter on the storage of material. Otherwise, this book of King's College's professor emeritus of pastoral theology is of interest mainly for its suggested sermon plans. If they are typical of preaching in the United Kingdom, it is not difficult to understand why such small attendance is reported at services in that country. ★BEARING WITNESS TO THE TRUTH, by **Harold Cooke Phillips** (Abingdon-Cokesbury, $2.50), deals helpfully with many problems the preacher meets in his preaching ministry. These Lyman Beecher "Yale" lectures on preaching are drawn from the wide experience of a notably successful preacher.

ROUNDUP

★★SPEAK FOR YOURSELF. By **Jessica Somers Driver.** Harper, $2.75. Do you say what you mean? Do you say it convincingly? Have you resisted the "preacher tone"? Well, even so, here is a book you need.

★★★THE CRAFT OF SERMON ILLUSTRATION. By **W. E. Sangster.** Westminster, $2.50. Good reading and helpful suggestions from page one to the last word. Chapter VI on "Mistakes Commonly Made," if heeded would run Morton S. Enslin out of business (that is, the business of writing "Where Do They Get Them?" articles).

A TREASURY OF SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS. Edited by **Charles L. Wallis.** Abingdon-Cokesbury, $3.50. Well indexed and cross-referenced. Contains most of the old chestnuts plus a few you never heard before.

★PROBLEMS THAT PLAGUE THE SAINTS. By **W. A. Poovey.** Wartburg, Columbus, Ohio, $2.00. Why Poovey chose to place his essay on "Your Money or Your Soul" first—indeed, why he chose to include it at all—is obscure. But the reader who is not disheartened by it will find real meat and excellent sermonic help in succeeding chapters.

GARLAND EVANS HOPKINS

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

An analysis based on reports from leading religious book sellers and from the reading of The Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers

This Month	
1	**Here I Stand.** *Roland H. Bainton. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $4.75
2	**Life of Jesus.** *Edgar J. Goodspeed. Harper,* $3.00
3	**Mr. Jones Meet the Master.** *Peter Marshall. Revell,* $2.50
4	**Today Is Mine.** *Thomas Curtis Clark. Harper,* $1.50
5	**American Freedom and Catholic Power.** *Paul Blanshard. Beacon Press,* $3.50
6	**Through Christ Our Lord.** *Georgia Harkness. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $1.25
7	**Start Where You Are.** *Arnold H. Lowe. Harper,* $2.00
8	**Basic Christian Ethics.** *Paul Ramsey. Scribner's,* $3.75
9	**Luther and His Times.** *E. G. Schwiebert. Concordia,* $10.00
10	**Great Pulpit Masters—Dwight L. Moody.** *Revell,* $2.25

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE FORMATION of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. marks the highest point yet reached in the progress toward the goal of a united Protestantism. It is important, however, to distinguish its true meaning from an erroneous understanding of what took place at Cleveland, Ohio, last November. The new organization is not a union of its 32 denominations to form one church. It is an extension of the principle of federal union which was adopted by the churches forty-two years ago when the Federal Council of Churches was launched. Structurally considered, the National Council is simply an enlarged Federal Council—enlarged by embracing certain functions hitherto exercised by separate agencies. The ecclesiastical independence of the denominations remains undisturbed. Three of the new functions of this federal union—foreign missions, home missions and religious education—have at least a semi-ecclesiastical character. Though the administration of these added activities is meticulously tied to the autonomy of the denominations, it is not unlikely that the denominations themselves will soon see the necessity of a united Protestant witness in these three fields. Certainly their association in a more inclusive federal union will inevitably draw them closer together than their limited commitments under the constitution envisage. The first half of this century has witnessed a great development from the timid beginning at the birth of the Federal Council. We may dare to hope that before the last half of the century is far advanced, the spirit of unity so manifest at Cleveland will lead the churches into a more perfect union than the federal principle is able to provide.

Protestant Churches Draw Closer Together

The Book of the Month

CHAPTERS IN A LIFE OF PAUL, *by John Knox. Abingdon-Cokesbury, $2.50.*

IF ANY READER thinks that my frequent selection of books on the New Testament for this place of honor betrays a weakness on my part for such books, I am not offended at his thinking so. The New Testament under the hands of modern scholarship has given the Christian revelation new life, new validity, new authenticity. Dr. Knox has helped me as no other scholar has done. I have read all his books and none has been more fascinating and illuminating than these chapters on Paul. The first part of his book is an examination of the two sources of our knowledge of Paul—the book of Acts and Paul's own letters. The agreements and discrepancies between these sources are brought out with exquisite skill. The discrepancies are resolved in favor of the biographical information contained in the letters. The latter half of the book is the most thorough and rewarding analysis of the mind of Paul that I have found. To mention one point only: the astonishing fact that the words "repentance" and "forgiveness," which were central in the teaching of Jesus, are absent from Paul's letters. But Dr. Knox shows that the reality of these concepts pervades the Apostle's thought in his own words, "justification" and "reconciliation." Merely to *recommend* this book does not adequately express my feeling about it. I honestly *yearn* that every reader of The Pulpit might possess it and read it (and all the other Knox books).

A Thought for the Month

MY ESTEEMED COLLEAGUE, Garland Evans Hopkins, has, in less than one year, so fully demonstrated his journalistic gifts that he has been entrusted with the responsibility of enlarging The Pulpit and enriching its contents. The ideal and purpose of the new Pulpit are shared by us both. This ideal is to provide the Christian ministry with the best in contemporary preaching, to discuss and critically analyze the preaching function in our present-day world, and last but not least to inspire the minister to keep growing intellectually by pursuing the theological and cultural interests into which he was initiated—but only initiated—in college and seminary. I am depresed at discovering the extent to which so many ministers allowed their intellectual growth to stop the moment they entered their first pastorate. This is tragic, not only for the minister but for the churches. The Pulpit makes high claims for itself as an auxiliary, but its purpose is defeated if it is taken as a substitute for the systematic and persistent endeavor to keep abreast of the theological and cultural insights of contemporary and classical scholarship. New light is breaking forth from God's Word in our time, and no minister should rest under the illusion that what he learned in the seminary is sufficient for today. A church paying a minimum salary should provide in its budget at least $100 a year for its pastor to spend on books. This is no less important than a parsonage or his expenses to a church convention. The practical demands of the parish, inescapable and rewarding as they are, provide no valid excuse for the minister's neglect of his own cultural growth.

Ministers Must Keep Growing

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

WELL, HERE IT IS—the new Pulpit we have been telling you about since early in October. Of course, we hope you will like it. And, of course, we know all of you won't—at first. No magazine can change its old familiar format without some pangs on the part of both the editors and the readers. Even my beloved colleague Dr. Morrison has shaken his head sadly more than once in the long and arduous birthing of the new Pulpit. And both of us will wish many times for the "good old days" when getting The Pulpit ready for press was a relatively simple matter compared with the work each issue of the new journal will occasion. But changing times make new demands and both Dr. Morrison and I are convinced that there is a widely felt need for a new approach in homiletic magazines. We take pride in presenting to you the results of our very best efforts to create the kind of journal which you, the preachers of the English-speaking world—the real editors for whom we serve as proxies—have indicated you wanted.

In his "Thought for the Month," Dr. Morrison has defined the mission of the new Pulpit. As he has indicated, our primary purpose is to assist in raising the level of preaching throughout the English-speaking world, beginning with you. If you are satisfied with your present level of preaching, for your own peace of mind send in your subscription cancellation now. Morton S. Enslin and a host of other contributors in issues to come will be here every month with challengingly critical appraisals of *your* preaching. If you are satisfied with your church's musical program, Ernest K. Emurian will only serve to raise unnecessary doubts in your mind. If you are reading only books published by your own denominational book concern and feel no need for a broader perspective, "Preachers in Print" will just annoy you. If all you want in a homiletic journal is a supplementary sermon barrel, there are other places where you can get that without running any risk of being brought face to face with disturbing new—or long forgotten—ideas.

But if you sometimes feel that you had rather leave by a back door than face your departing congregation after a Sunday morning's effort that started out as a good idea ended up as a platitudinous flop, then, brother, there is hope for you! And the new Pulpit is your magazine in a very special way.

From past experience it is hardly necessary to suggest that you write us your ideas about our new format, dress and content. But, for the record, we want to invite you to do just that.

G. E. H.

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A Journal of Contemporary Preaching
Founded 1929

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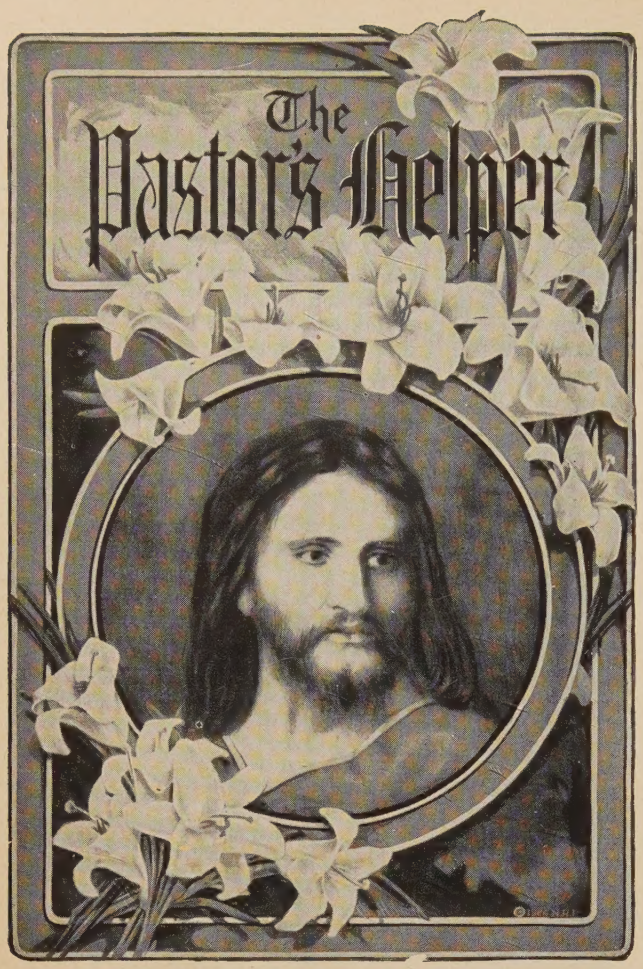

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